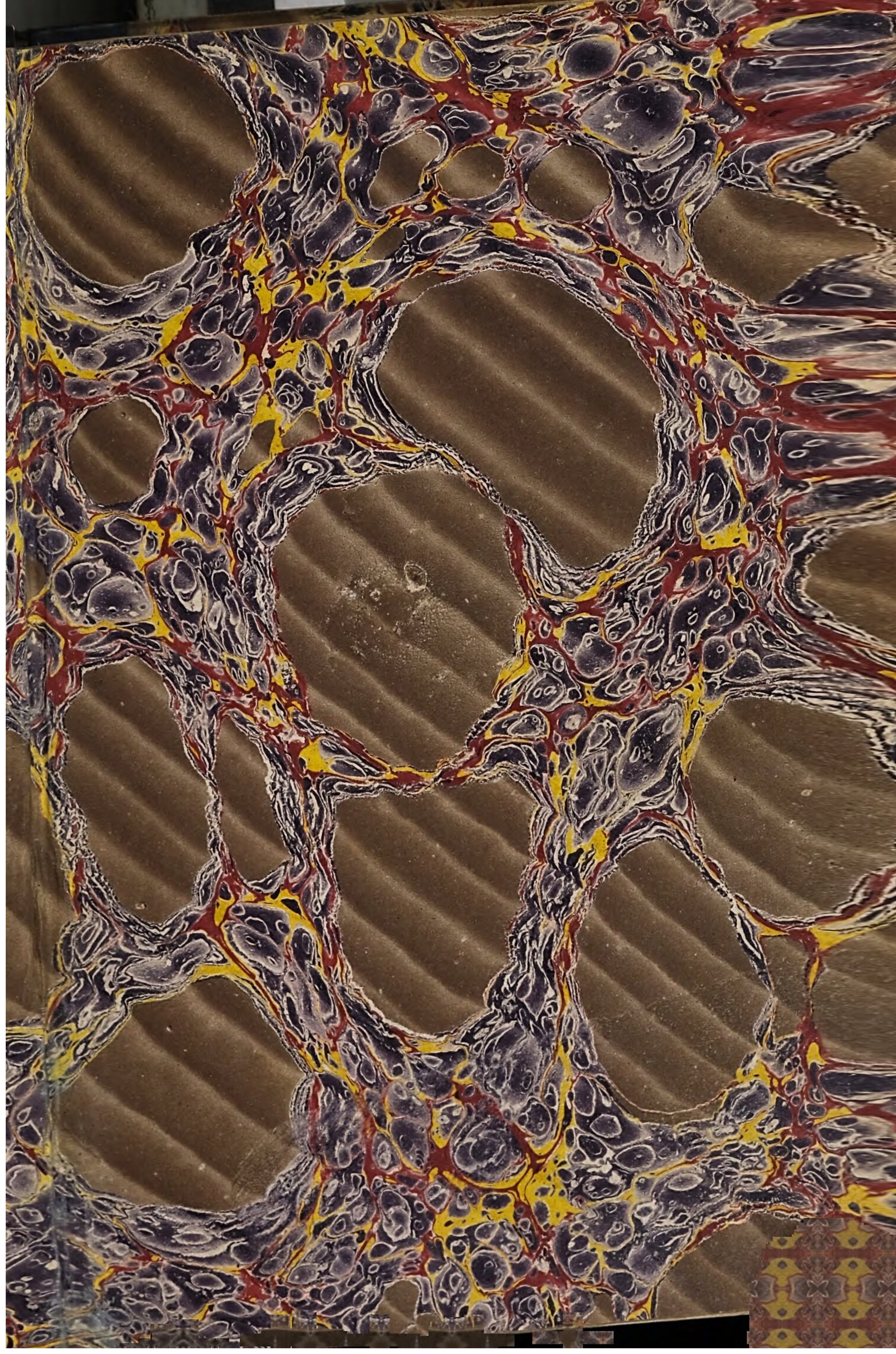






CAPT.^N GORDON,
Royal Navy.



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THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY JOHN BURNET

ESQ.

OF LINCOLN'S INN

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

1678

LONDON:

JOHN BURNET, PUBLISHED

AT THE SIGN OF THE

1678

PERCIVAL KEENE.

BY CAPT. MARRYAT,

AUTHOR OF

“PETER SIMPLE,” “JACOB FAITHFUL,”

&c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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PERCIVAL KEENE.



CHAPTER I.

IT was not until three or four days after the ship had sailed from Martinique that the captain spoke to me. I had, during that time, remained in my cot, which was hung up in the fore-cabin, and when the surgeon dressed my wounds it was only in the presence of Bob Cross. On the fourth morning after our sailing, the captain came inside of the screen, which was hung round my cot:—"Well, Mr.

Keene," said he, in a very kind voice, "how are you?"

"Much better, Sir, I thank you; and hope you will look over the great liberty I ventured to take for the honour of the service."

"Why," replied the captain, smiling, "I think you have been sufficiently punished already for your temerity; I appreciate your motive of action, and feel obliged to you for your great zeal towards the service and towards me. The only objection (I may say annoyance) I have on the subject is, the mystery and secrecy compelled to be observed in consequence of your taking my place, and still more, that one of the seamen of the ship should be a party to the secret."

"I certainly did not consider the consequences as I ought to have done, Sir, when I ventured to act as I did," replied I.

"Say no more about it, Mr. Keene. I am very sorry to hear of your mother's death; but it was not, I believe, unexpected."

“No, Sir,” replied I; “and therefore the shock has not been so great.”

“Well, Mr. Keene, of course it is from the interest I took in your mother that I was induced to take you under my protection, and her death will make no difference in that point, so long as you conduct yourself as you have hitherto done. You have now created a strong interest for yourself by your good conduct, and I shall not lose sight of you. How many months have you yet to serve before your time is out?”

“I have served five years and seven months, as far as I can recollect.”

“So I thought. Now, Mr. Keene, it was because I thought of you that I did not fill up the lieutenant’s vacancy which was made by the death of Captain W. and the promotion of the commander and my first lieutenant. As soon as you are well, I will give you an acting order as lieutenant of this ship; and, as we are now on a sort of roving commission, I have no

doubt but that you will have served your time, and found the means of passing, before we join the admiral ; your promotion will, under such circumstances, be, I have no doubt, confirmed ; so, all you have to do now is to get well as fast as you can. Good-by."

The captain gave me a most gracious nod, and then went outside of the screen, giving me no time for thanks. I was, indeed, overjoyed ; not so much at the promotion as at the change in the captain's manner towards me : a change so palpable that it filled me with the fondest anticipations. I remained for a long while reflecting upon my future prospects. As a lieutenant of the same ship, I should be more in contact with him : he could now converse and take notice of me without its being considered remarkable ; nay, he could be intimate with me. I resolved to be most careful in my conduct, so as not to alarm his pride by the least familiarity, and hoped, eventually, to play my cards so as to obtain my earnest wish ; but

I felt that there was a great deal of ground to go over first, and that the greatest circumspection was necessary. I felt that I had still to raise myself in his opinion and in the opinion of the world to a much higher position than I was in at present, before I could expect that Captain Delmar would, virtually, acknowledge me as his son. I felt that I had to wade through blood, and stand the chance of thousands of balls and bullets in my professional career, before I could do all this; a bright vista of futurity floated before me, and, in the far distance, I felt myself in the possession of my ambition, and with my eyes still fixed upon it, I dropped fast asleep, revelling still in the same dreams which I had indulged in when awake.

In a fortnight I was quite recovered; my wounds had healed up, and I now walked about. Having had my uniform altered by the ship's tailor, and procured an epaulet from one

of the lieutenants, I took possession of my cabin in the gun-room, and was warmly received by my new messmates ; but I did not return to my duty for nearly a month, on account of a little lameness still remaining, and which the surgeon declared was often the case after the yellow fever!!

I ought to have observed, that when my mother was so indulgent as to commit suicide for my sake, she had taken every precaution, and the letter of my grandmother informed Captain Delmar that my mother had bequeathed me £12,000 in the three per cents, which she had laid by from her business, and that therefore there was no longer any occasion that I should be an expense to Captain Delmar. It must not, however, be supposed, from my grandmother stating this, that Captain Delmar was at all mercenary or stingy ; on the contrary, considering that, as the second son of a nobleman, he had only £1,000 per annum

besides his pay, he was exceedingly liberal (although not extravagant) in all money matters.

At last I was well enough to return to my duty ; and glad I was to be once more walking the quarter-deck, not as before, on the lee, but on the weather side, with an epaulet on my shoulder. Strange to say, there was not a midshipman in the ship (although there were so many) who had served so long as I had, and in consequence there was not any heart-burning or jealousy at my promotion, and I continued on the best terms with my old mess-mates, although gradually lessening the intimacy which existed between us. But that was not intentional on my part ; it was the effect of my promotion, and removal from the berth of a set of lads to the company of the senior and older officers. I was now a man, and had the feelings and thoughts of a man. My frolics and tricks were discarded with the midship-

man's coat, and in respecting my new rank I respected myself.

Now that I walked on the same side of the deck, Captain Delmar very often entered into conversation with me ; and although at first it was with caution on his part, yet, when he found that I never presumed, and was, invariably, most respectful, he became on much more intimate terms with me.

During three months we continued cruizing about without falling in with or having received any intelligence of the French frigate which we were sent in quest of ; at last, Captain Delmar resolved to change the cruizing ground, and we ran up to ten degrees of latitude further north.

As we were running up we fell in with an American brig, and brought her to ; a boat was sent for the captain, who, when he came on board, was interrogated by Captain Delmar, as to his having seen or heard of any French

vessel on that coast. As the conversation took place on the quarter-deck, and I was officer of the watch, I can repeat it.

“ Well,” replied the American through his nose, “ I reckon there is a Frenchman in these parts ?”

“ Have you fallen in with her ?” inquired Captain Delmar.

“ Well, I may say I have ; for I laid alongside of her in Cartagena when I was taking in my cargo of hides. You haven’t such a thing as a spar as will make me a pole top-gallant mast, captain, have you ?”

“ Is she large or small ?”

“ Well, captain, I don’t care whether the spar be large or small ; I’ve two carpenters on board, and I’ll soon dub it down into shape.”

“ I inquired about the vessel — I did not refer to the spar,” replied Captain Delmar, haughtily.

“ And I referred to the spar, which is my

business, and not to the vessel, which is no consarn of mine," replied the American captain. "You see, master, we have both our wants; you want information, I want a spar: I've no objection to a fair swop."

"Well," replied Captain Delmar, rather amused, "give me the information, and you shall have the spar."

"That's agreed."

"Send for the carpenter, and desire him to get out a small spar, Mr.—," said Captain Delmar to the first lieutenant.

"Well, captain, that looks like business, and so now I'll go on. The Frenchman is as large as you: may be," said he, looking round the deck, "he may be a bit larger, but you won't mind that, I suppose."

"Did you leave her in port when you sailed?"

"I reckon she was off two days before me."

"And how many days is it since you sailed?"

“Just four days, I calculate.”

“And did you hear where she was going to?”

“Yes, I did, and I’ve a notion I could put my finger upon her now, if I choosed. Captain, you haven’t got a coil of two-inch which you could lend me—I ain’t got a topsail brace to reeve, and mine are very queer just now. I reckon they’ve been turned end for end so often, that there’s an end of them.”

“You say that you know where the vessel is—where is she?”

“Captain, that’s telling—can’t I have the two-inch?”

“We have not a whole coil of two-inch left, Sir,” said the master, touching his hat. “We might spare him enough for a pair of new braces.”

“Well, well, I’m reasonable altogether, and if so be you haven’t got it, I don’t expect it. It’s very odd now, but I can’t just now remember the place that French vessel was going to; it’s slipped clean out of my memory.”

‘Perhaps the two-inch might help your memory,’ replied the captain. ‘Mr. Smith, let the rope be got up and put into the boat.’

‘Well,’ said the American captain, ‘as you say, Mister, it may help my memory. It’s not the first time that I’ve freshened a man’s memory with a bit of two-inch myself,’ continued he, grinning at his own joke; ‘but I don’t see it coming.’

‘I have ordered it to be put in the boat,’ replied Captain Delmar, haughtily: ‘my orders are not disobeyed, nor is my word doubted.’

‘Not by them as knows you, I dare say, Captain, but you’re a stranger to me; I don’t think I ask much, after all—a bit of spar and a bit of rope—just to tell you where you may go and take a fine vessel, and pocket a nation lot of dollars as prize-money. Well, there’s the rope, and now I’ll tell you. She was going off Berbice, or Surinam, to look after the West Indiamen, who were on the coast, or expected on it, I don’t know which. There you’ll find

her, as sure as I stand here; but I think that she is a bit bigger than this vessel—you don't mind that, I dare say."

"You may go on board now, Sir," said Captain Delmar.

"Well, thank ye, Captain, and good luck to you."

The American captain went down the side, and as soon as our boat returned and was hoisted up, we made all sail for the coast of Demerara.

"She must be a fine vessel," said Captain Delmar to me, as he was walking the deck—"a very fine vessel, if she is bigger than we are."

"You will excuse me, Captain Delmar, if I venture to observe that there was an expression in the eye of that American, when he said a bit bigger, which made me take it into my head, that in saying so he was only deceiving us. The Americans are not very partial to us, and would be glad of any revenge."

"That may be, Mr. Keene; but I do not

see that he can be deceiving us, by making her out to be larger, as it is putting us on our guard. Had he said that she was smaller, it would then have been deceiving us."

"I did not take it in that sense, Sir," replied I. "He said a bit bigger; now I can't help thinking that a bit bigger was meant to deceive us, and that it will prove that the Frenchman is a line-of-battle ship, and not a frigate: he wished to leave us under the impression that it was a larger frigate than our own, and no more."

"It may be so," replied Captain Delmar, thoughtfully: "at all events, Mr. Keene, I am obliged to you for the suggestion."

The captain took two or three more turns fore and aft in silence, and then quitted the deck.

CHAPTER II.

IN three days we had gained the latitude of Berbice, and on the fourth morning the men at the mast-head were keeping a sharp look-out for any strange sail. Our head was then towards the land, which, being very low, could not be seen; the breeze was light, the royals had been set, and the men piped down to breakfast, when the mast-head-man reported three sail right ahead. We soon made them out to be merchant vessels, and as they separated and made all sail from us, we made sure that they had been captured; and so it proved when we took possession of them, which we did not do of the third before night-fall.

Upon interrogating the prisoners and the few English who had been left on board the prizes, we found out that I had been right in my conjecture; they had been captured by a French line-of-battle ship, which they had left in shore the evening before. The English reported her a very fast sailer, and believed her to be an eighty gun ship—indeed the French prisoners acknowledged that such was the case.

This was very important intelligence, and Captain Delmar walked up and down deck in deep thought: the fact was, he was puzzled how to act. To attempt to cope with such a force, unless under peculiarly favourable circumstances, would be madness: to leave the coast and our mercantile navy exposed to her depredations, was at the same time very repulsive to his feelings and sense of duty. The prizes had been manned, the prisoners were on board, the boats hoisted up, and the Manilla still remained hove to. The fact was, the captain did

not know which way to put the ship's head, and he walked up and down in deep thought.

“Mr. Keene, is it your watch?”

“No, Sir.”

“Oblige me by telling the master to work up the reckoning; I wish to know exactly where we are.”

“It is done already, Sir,” replied I, “and pricked off on the chart—I have just left the gun-room.”

“Then, Mr. Keene, bring the chart into my cabin.” I followed into the cabin with the chart, which I laid down on the table, and pointed out the position of the ship.

“You were right in your supposition, Mr. Keene,” said the captain; “and really, this vessel turning out to be a line-of-battle ship has put me in a very awkward predicament—I really am puzzled. Fighting is of no use, and yet run away I will not, if I can possibly help it.”

Now, I had been studying the chart, and

had made up my own mind how I should have acted under the circumstances, had I been in Captain Delmar's position. The great point was, to give him my ideas, without appearing to offer advice ; I therefore replied, " We have one advantage, at all events, Sir ; we have been cruizing so long that we are flying light—I don't think we draw sixteen feet water."

" Yes, that may give us the heels of her in light winds, certainly," replied the captain.

" I think she cannot draw less than twenty-six or twenty-seven feet of water, Sir," continued I, to put him on the right scent, " which, on this coast, will be a great advantage. I think, Sir, when I was down below, I measured from soundings to soundings, and the water is so shallow and deepens so gradually, that there is a distance of four miles between seventeen feet and twenty-eight feet water."

I took up the compass, so as to take in the two soundings laid down in the chart, and then measuring the distance, shewed that my asser-

tion was true. The captain said nothing for a little while ; at last I perceived a smile on his lips. "Tell the officer of the watch to lower down the cutter, Mr. Keene. Go on board of the prizes, and tell them, in addition to their present orders to follow us, that in case of an enemy, they are to run as close in shore as the water will allow them, and drop their anchors."

"Ay, ay, Sir," replied I, leaving the cabin.

This order satisfied me that the captain perceived what I would suggest, which was, that if we once got in shore and in shallow water, we might laugh at the line-of-battle ship, which, in all probability, would not be able to get near enough to reach us with her guns ; or if she attempted it, she would run on shore, and then we should have the best of it.

As soon as I had given the orders to the prize-masters, and returned on board, the boat was hoisted up, and all sail made for the land. At twelve o'clock we sounded, and found our-

selves in nine-fathom water, by which we calculated we were about thirty miles from the land. I hardly need say that a most careful look-out was kept up, that we might not fall in with our formidable adversary.

At one o'clock the moon rose, and I, having the middle watch, surveyed the horizon on every side, but without discovering the enemy ; but at half-past three the day dawned, and before my watch was over it was broad daylight ; and then, just as I was going down, having been relieved by the second lieutenant, a strange sail was reported about eight miles to leeward, two points before the beam.

The second lieutenant hastened down to the cabin, to report to the captain, and I went up to the mast-head to make her out, and I soon discovered that she was a line-of-battle ship : I immediately descended and reported to the captain, who had come on deck. As we could distinguish the masts and sails of the enemy very well from the deck, the glasses were fixed

upon her at the gangway, and she was seen to set her royals and flying jib in chase of us ; but we felt that we were safe, as we should be in shallow water long before she could beat up to us. All we had to fear for was the merchant vessels which we had re-taken, and which were two or three miles astern of us, with all the sail that they could carry.

It was a five-knot breeze, and the water quite smooth, which was very favourable for the line-of-battle ship and ourselves, but not for the merchant vessels, which, with their cargoes, required more wind to propel them through the water. The state of affairs when the hands were piped to breakfast was as follows :—

The French line-of-battle ship had stood in for the land, under all sail, until half-past seven, being then, as she was when we first saw her, exactly two points before the beam, when, probably being in shoal water, she had tacked, and was now a little abaft our beam, and lying pretty well up for the merchant vessel

the furthest astern of us. Since she had tacked, she had risen her hull out of water, so as to shew her upper tier of guns. Two of the merchant vessels were about three miles astern of us,—the other one, five, and stood a fair chance of being cut off; the more so, because when we discovered the enemy, we were standing about two points free, right for the coast, whereas, upon her hauling her wind in chase, we of course did the same, which made us approach the shallow water in a more slanting direction, and, consequently, not get in quite so soon. We were now in seven fathoms water, and, by our pricking off on the chart, about eleven miles from land, which was so low as to be barely visible from the mast-head. The men were allowed an hour to their breakfast, and then we beat to quarters. The captain did not, however, put out the fires, so as to prevent the ship's company's dinner being cooked, as every thing was ready, and the magazines could be opened in a minute.

At ten o'clock, we had drawn into six fathoms water; the Frenchman was now nearly astern of us, still on the opposite tack, and passing about three miles to leeward of the merchant vessel which lagged most behind. It was now considered certain that she would re-capture this vessel, which was at least seven miles astern of us, and not impossible that she might take one, if not both, of the others, as it was evident she was a prime sailer, as fast, almost, as our own ship.

At a quarter-past ten, the French line-of-battle ship tacked, and stood right after us in our wake, being now hull down about twelve miles from us.

"He'll soon have the starnmost vessel, Mr. Keene," said Bob Cross to me. "Mr. Dott has charge of her; he is always in some scrape or other."

"Yes," replied I; "but he gets out of them, and I dare say he will out of this."

“Helm up there, quarter-master—flatten in forward.”

“The wind’s heading us, Sir,” said the master; “she’s full again, now. Thus, boy, and nothing off.”

“She has broken off two points, Sir.”

“All the better,” replied the captain; “it’s a squeak for Mr. Dott.”

In a few minutes we perceived that the other vessel had met the change in the wind, and had broken off as well as ourselves. The Frenchman did not now lay up for the merchant vessel as she did before, and the latter had some chance of escape. It was very exciting: for as the time drew nearer to noon, the wind became more light and more variable, and at one time all the vessels broke off another point; shortly afterwards, the wind flew back again to the point which it at first blew from, and the enemy laid once more right up for the merchant vessels. The French line-of-battle ship

was still about four miles astern of the merchant vessel nearest to her.

“ I think we shall have a calm soon,” observed Captain Delmar. “ Square the main-yard ; we may as well be nearer to her, as not, now ; for if it falls calm she will recapture them with her boats, and we shall be too far to give any assistance. Get the yard tackles up : all ready, Mr. — ?”

“ Ay, ay, Sir,” replied the first lieutenant.

“ Pipe the boat’s crew away, and let them get their guns and ammunition on the gangway.”

It was about a quarter to eleven when we hove to, the breeze still continuing variable and light, and the French line-of-battle ship did not come up so fast as before. We sounded after we hove to, and found that we were in five and a half fathoms water.

At twelve o’clock, in consequence of our having hove to, the relative positions of the

vessels were as follows :—The two merchant vessels which had been about four miles astern of us were now alongside of us, the third was about three miles astern of us, and the Frenchman was about the same distance astern of her ; so that our frigate was about six miles from the French line-of-battle ship.

Captain Delmar had given orders to pipe to dinner at seven bells (half-past eleven o'clock) ; that in case the boats were required, the men might have dined before they were sent away. A few minutes after twelve o'clock it fell a dead calm, the hands were turned up, the boats hoisted out and lowered down, the guns and ammunition put in them, and every thing in readiness ; we keeping our glasses upon the enemy, and watching her manœuvring, which, at the distance we were, was now easily to be distinguished. Captain Delmar was aware that he ran some risk in sending his boats away, for it might so happen that a breeze might spring up from the seaward, and the enemy have the

advantage of it long before us ; if so, it might bring her up to the vessel astern, and the boats be captured : indeed, it might bring her up nearly alongside of us before we caught the wind. It was necessary, therefore, to be very cautious, and not send the boats away till the last moment—that is, before we saw the French ship hoisting out or lowering down her own. That the Frenchmen knew that our boats had been hoisted out, could not be doubted, as their eyes were quite as sharp as ours. They, however, tried to double us ; for, all of a sudden, as I had my glass upon the French ship, I perceived three boats coming round her quarter, and pulling right for the merchant vessel : the fact was, that she had lowered down her stern and quarter boats to leeward, which we could not perceive. I reported this immediately to the captain, who ordered the boats' crews to be piped away.

“ Who is to command the boats, Sir ? ” said the first lieutenant.

“ Mr. Keene,” said the captain.

“ Mr. Keene, I wish to speak with you before you go.”

Captain Delmar then walked to the capstern, and, in few words, pointed out what I have just stated as the difficulty which might occur, and the chances of capture.

“ You understand me, Mr. Keene ?”

“ Perfectly, Sir,” replied I.

“ Well, then, I trust to your discretion, Mr. Keene, and hope I shall not be disappointed. Now you may go.”

“ The French ship is getting up her yard tackles,” said the signal man.

“ Then you have no time to lose, Mr. Keene. As for the small boats, they are of no consequence.”

I went down the side, and shoved off. Our men gave way cheerfully and manfully, and the three boats of the Frenchmen had but a little start of us. In half an hour we were both within less than a mile of the merchant vessel.

but the French boats were the nearest of the two. The affair now became very exciting. In another ten minutes the French boats had gained the merchant vessel, and the men were clambering up her sides, while we were not more than three cables' lengths from them. That Tommy Dott was defending himself was to be presumed, as a good deal of firing took place ; but before we could get alongside it was evident that he and his men had been mastered, and the French were in possession of the vessel. But now our turn came. Dividing my boats, six in number, into two divisions, we boarded on both sides, and very soon had regained the vessel and mastered the French, who did not amount to more than thirty-five men, while we had more than seventy.

We found that the Frenchmen had not spared our people on board of the vessel, all of them being wounded or killed ; but the fact was, that Tommy Dott had fought most nobly, and resisted to the very last. He himself, poor

fellow ! lay against the capstern, with his head cut open by a blow of a cutlass, and quite insensible. As soon as we had secured the prisoners, I turned my eyes to the line-of-battle ship, and saw that her large boats had shoved off ; they were five in number, but much larger, and holding more men than we had.

A little reflection decided me that we should have a better chance of resisting them on board of the vessel than in the boats, and I determined that I would get my boats' guns up on board of the vessel, and arm her in that way. It was necessary, however, to secure our boats, that they might not cut them away from alongside ; I therefore, as soon as the guns and ammunition were on board, lowered the iron chain cable down from the bows, and passed it from one boat to the other under the fixed thwarts of each boat, including those captured from the French, hauling the end of the cable on board again through the stern port ; we had plenty of time to do this, and make any other

preparation on board, before the French boats arrived.

It was a dead calm, the sea was like a mirror, and the advancing boats, as their oars rose and fell in the water, gave you the idea of creatures possessed of life and volition, as they rapidly forced their way through the yielding fluid. The vessel's stern was towards the line-of-battle ship, and the boats were pulling up a little on the starboard quarter; the guns which I had hoisted on board had, for want of any other means, been sufficiently secured by ropes to the slides and breechings to enable us to fire them with effect. When the boats were about a quarter of a mile from us we opened our fire; not that we expected much from our guns, as we knew we could not obtain more than two good shots at the boats before they were alongside; still there was a chance of hitting and disabling them, and no chance was to be thrown away.

Our first shot was successful; it struck one

of the pinnaces, and she swamped immediately. Our men cheered, while the other French boats pulled to it, and took up the men who were floating in the water. Before they could effect this, another gun was fired with grape and round, which, apparently, did some execution, as there appeared to be much confusion on board of the two boats that had gone to the assistance of their comrades. We now fully expected the boats to advance; on the contrary, they spread out on each quarter and opened their fire upon us with their guns,—a very foolish act on their part, as it gave us every advantage; for they were far superior to us in number of men, and should have boarded us at once, instead of risking the loss of more of their boats. So little did we expect this, that at one time I was debating whether I should not leave the guns in the boats alongside instead of getting them on board, that there might be no delay in case wind sprang up, and it were necessary that we should be off; of course, as it

was, I was very glad that I had decided otherwise.

The action, if it may be so termed, now continued for about half an hour without any great casualty on either side: we had five or six men wounded on board of the vessel, but none killed. I had occasionally looked round to see if there was any appearance of wind, and just about this time I perceived a black line in the offing, which promised not only wind, but wind from the very quarter which would be most disastrous to us, and I began to feel very anxious, when I heard a bugle sounded from the largest French boat. This was the signal to advance, and I was very glad, as the affair would now be soon decided.

As all our boats were secured on the starboard side of the vessel, the Frenchmen did not attempt to board on that side, as in so doing it would have been at a double disadvantage; they had therefore no alternative but to board all together on the larboard side. Two of the

boats' guns had been fixed on that side—double shotted and depressed, so as to be fired at the moment one of the boats should pass beneath them : they were both fired at the leading boat, the launch, which was very large and full of men, and the shot went through her bottom. This did not prevent her coming alongside ; but she filled and sank almost immediately afterwards, while the men were climbing up the sides of the vessel. The sinking of this boat prevented the men of the other boats outside of her from supporting their companions, and we had therefore only to meet the force of the launch and the two other boats which had come alongside ahead of her, and which was in number not equal to our own.

We always had an idea that the French would never do much in the way of boarding, and so it proved ; they were beat down as fast as they made their appearance above the bulwarks. The French lieutenant was attempting to get over the gunwale ; he was unsup-

ported, as almost all his men had tumbled back into the sea. Instead of cutting him down, I caught him by the collar, and hauled him on board, and as soon as he was disarmed, gave him in charge of a marine. In ten minutes all was over: two of the French boats remained alongside, and the others shoved off, half manned, and dropped astern. We gave them three cheers as a parting salutation; but we had no time to lose—the wind was evidently springing up fast, already cats' paws were to be seen here and there rippling the water, and the line on the horizon was now dark and broad. I ordered our boats to be ready for starting, the guns to be got in, and the wounded men divided among them as fast as possible. The two large French boats which remained on the starboard side we cleared of the men who lay in them, and then had their bottoms beat out to sink them. The French lieutenant and two other officers I ordered into our own boats, to take on board as prisoners; the rest of the French

who had been captured, with their wounded, we put into the three small French boats which had been captured in the first attack, taking away their oars, that, when I shoved off and left the vessel, they might drift about, till they were picked up by the French ship.

Every thing being in readiness, I had now to decide what I should do with the merchant vessel. The wind coming up so fast from the seaward gave her no chance of escape, and I decided that I would set her on fire. Having so done in three different parts, to ensure her destruction, I then shoved off with our boats, having first pushed off the Frenchmen in their boats without oars, and wished them good-by: they certainly did look very foolish, and any thing but pleased.

As we pulled for the frigate, I perceived that the line-of-battle ship's sails were filling, and that it was touch and go with us; but I also knew that she could not leave her boats, and that it would take some time to pick them

up: two were half manned, and pulling towards her; the other three were without oars, and must be picked up by the other boats; all of which would occasion delay. Notwithstanding, we pulled as hard as we could, and were half-way back before the breeze was sufficiently steady to enable the line-of-battle ship to make much progress through the water. Of course, we could not well see what was going on when we had pulled away in the boats, and were at a distance; all we could see was, that the French line-of-battle ship was not yet in chase, from which we presumed that she had not yet picked up her boats. In the meantime the merchant vessel burnt furiously, and the columns of smoke very often hid the enemy from our view.

Before we arrived on board, the breeze had passed us and caught the sails of our frigate and the two merchant vessels, so that we were more easy on that score. Captain Delmar had been very anxious: the yards, tackles, and stays,

and the tackles for hoisting up the quarter-boats, were all ready hanging down as we pulled alongside, and "all hands in boats" was piped before we could get up the gangway. There was no time to be lost: the French line-of-battle ship had picked up her boats and was now in chase, with studding-sails below and abaft. The two merchant vessels had made all sail, and were running in shore ahead of us. I touched my hat to the captain, and said, "Come on board, Sir—shall I see the quarter-boats hoisted up?"

"If you please, Mr. Keene," replied he.

The fact was, it was very easy to tell my story after the boats were up and sail made upon the frigate, and I knew there was no time for talking.

I never witnessed such a rapidity as was shewn on this occasion: in less than five minutes all the boats were on board, and all sail made. I looked at the French line-of-battle ship; she was within four miles of us, and

bringing up a very steady breeze. But we were now drawing through the water, and as the recaptured vessels were three miles ahead of us, there was nothing to fear. Captain Delmar came aft to look at the Frenchman, who had already passed by the vessel which I had set on fire.

“Now, then, Mr. Keene,” said he, “we will know what has taken place. Of course, we have seen most of it.”

I narrated what the reader already knows.

“What do you suppose to have been the loss?”

“I should say three boats, and about forty men, Sir. I forgot, Sir, to tell you that we have a lieutenant and two officers prisoners, whom I brought on board with me.”

“Desire them to be brought on deck,” said the captain. “Mr. Keene, you have done your work well — with great gallantry and great judgment.”

I touched my hat, not a little pleased at such a compliment from Captain Delmar.

“What’s the last soundings, Mr. Smith?” inquired the captain.

“And a quarter four, Sir,” said the master.

“This chase won’t last long,” observed the captain. “Take in the lower studding-sail.”

The French lieutenant was then questioned ; but, with the exception of the name of the ship and captain, there was little to be expected from him, and he was dismissed and sent below.

This affair, however, was not without loss on our side (principally arising from Tommy Dott’s stout defence). We had two men killed, and we had altogether fourteen men wounded—some of them very severely. My friend Tommy Dott came on board a miserable object, his face and hair matted with blood ; but when it was washed away, he proved to be not so much hurt as was supposed : the cut was severe,

but the bones were not injured. He was very soon out of his hammock again, and his chief pleasure was to put his tongue in his cheek and make faces at the French lieutenant, who at last became so annoyed, that he complained to Captain Delmar, who ordered Mr. Tommy to leave off these expressions of national animosity, if he had any wish to obtain his promotion. But to return.

As the breeze freshened, and the French ship had the first of it, she rapidly gained upon us, and in an hour and a half was about three miles from us. We had now shoaled our water to three fathoms and a half, which was quite near enough to the ground, as it left but four feet between our keel and the bottom; the studding-sails were taken in, and we ranged the cable. A few minutes afterwards the French line-of-battle ship was seen to shorten sail, and haul to the wind; she had followed us into as shoal water as she dared to venture in, and as she rounded to, out of spite, I presume, she

fired a gun. The evening was now closing in, and as there was every appearance of fine weather, we stood out till we were again in four fathoms, and then dropped our anchor.

The next morning, when the day broke, the French line-of-battle ship was in the offing about eight miles distant. It may easily be imagined that the French were very much annoyed at what had taken place ;—their prizes recaptured, three boats lost, and their ship's company weakened, and all by an inferior force close to them, and without any prospect of their having any revenge. But we, on the other hand, were not very pleasantly situated. It is true that we were safe, but, at the same time, we were in prison, and could not hope for escape unless some vessel came down to our assistance ; and how long we might be compelled to remain where we were, or what the chapter of accidents might bring about, no one could foresee.

About eight o'clock the French ship again

stood in, and when as close as she dare come to us, she ran up and down, trying for deeper water on one side or the other, but in vain. She was within gun-shot of us, it is true, as we had run out into four fathoms, but we could always trip our anchor when we pleased and stand further in. At last she tried a shot at us, and it fell very close. Captain Delmar did not, however, get under weigh and stand further in, although he ordered the capstern bars to be shipped, and the messenger passed. A second and a third shot were fired, and one went over us. At last the Frenchman anchored, and set to work in good earnest. He found that he was within range, and as we did not move, presumed that we were in as shallow water as we could run into.

As the wind was still to seaward, we laid head on to him, and one of his shot struck us in the forefoot ; Captain Delmar then ordered the cable to be hove in and the anchor tripped, by which means we drifted in shore, and increased our

distance without his being aware of it, and his firing still continued, but without injury to us. The reason for Captain Delmar's doing this was evident ; he wished the French ship to continue firing, as the report of her guns might be heard, and bring down some vessel to our assistance. At all events, such was not our good fortune on the first day, and I began to be tired of our situation ; so did Captain Delmar, for on the second day he sent a boat to the recaptured vessels, which were at anchor in shore of us, directing them to heave up as soon as it was dark, and make the best of their way to Barbadoes, keeping well in shore till they got more to the northward : this they did, and the following morning they were not in sight.

The French ship still remained at anchor, and it appeared that she had been lightening so as to get further in, for on that morning she weighed, and stood in to a mile and a half of us, and we were obliged to do the same, and run in shore out of his reach. To effect this, we anchored in

three and a quarter fathoms, so that we actually stirred up the mud. Towards the evening the wind fortunately shifted to off shore, and as soon as it was dark the captain ordered the anchor to be weighed, and we made all sail to the northward, trusting to our heels; the following morning we had run seventy miles, and as the French ship was not to be seen, it was to be presumed that she was not aware of our having so done.

Ten days afterwards we dropped our anchor in Carlisle Bay, Barbadoes. We found two men-of-war, both captains junior officers to our own, and I took this opportunity of passing my examination, which was a mere matter of form. Having watered and taken in provisions, we then sailed for Jamaica, to join the admiral, who, upon Captain Delmar's representation, immediately confirmed the acting order of lieutenant given to me by him.

A few days afterwards a packet arrived from England, and letters were received by Captain

Delmar, informing him of the death of his elder brother, and his succeeding to the title of Lord de Versely, for his elder brother, although married, had no male issue. Upon this intelligence, Captain D. immediately resigned the command of the Manilla, and another captain was appointed to her. I did not much like this, as I wished to remain with Captain Delmar, and gain his good-will. I was, however, consoled, by his sending for me, previous to his sailing for England in a frigate ordered home, and saying, "Mr. Keene, my duties in the House of Lords, and family affairs, require my presence in England, and I think it most probable that I now quit the service altogether; but I shall not lose sight of you. You have conducted yourself much to my satisfaction, and I will take care of your advancement in the service, if you only continue as you have begun. I shall be happy to hear from you if you will write to me occasionally. I wish you every success. Is there any thing that I can do for you?"

“ I am most grateful, my lord,” replied I, “ for all your kindness. I had hoped to have been longer under your protection and guidance ; but I am aware that your high station must now prevent it. If I might be so bold as to ask a favour, my lord ?”

“ Certainly, Keene,” replied his lordship.

Keene ! not Mr. Keene, thought I.

“ It is, Sir, that I think I should have a better chance of doing something if I were to obtain the command of the Firefly schooner ; the lieutenant commanding her is about to invalid.”

“ I agree with you. I will speak to the admiral this very day. Is that all ?”

“ Yes, my lord ; unless you think you could ask for Cross, your coxswain, to be appointed to her. I should like to have a man on board whom I knew, and could trust.”

“ I will see about it, and so good-by.”

His lordship held out his hand. I took it very respectfully ; he had never done so before,

and the tears ran down my cheeks as I was quitting him. His lordship observed it, and turned away. I left the cabin, quite overcome with his kindness, and so happy, that I would not have changed positions with the grand sultan himself.

Lord de Versely was faithful to his promise ; the next day I received from the admiral my appointment to the Firefly, and, what was more unexpected, Bob Cross received a warrant as her boatswain. This was a very kind act of Lord de Versely, and I was as much delighted as Bob himself. I also received an invitation to dinner with the admiral on that day. On my arrival at the house, a few minutes before dinner, the admiral called me aside to the verandah, and said to me, “ Mr. Keene, I have not forgotten your cruize in the pirate schooner, and Lord de Versely has told me of your good behaviour in many instances since ; particularly of your conduct in the boats off Berbice. In his despatches he has given you great

praise, and I have added mine to back it ; so that if you only keep steady, you will command a sloop of war very soon. You have now been seven months a lieutenant, for your commission will be confirmed to your first appointment ; a few months more, and I hope to see you with a commander's commission in your pocket."

I replied, that I was very grateful, and only hoped that he would send me out in the schooner to where I might prove myself deserving of his patronage.

"Never fear. I'll find something for you to do, Mr. Keene. By-the-bye, Lord de Versely told me last night, when we were alone, the history of the duel at Martinique. You did well, Mr. Keene ; I thank you in the name of our service ; it won't do for the soldiers to crow over us, though they are fine fellows, it must be admitted. However, that secret had better be kept."

"Most certainly, Sir," replied I.

“ Now, then, there’s that black fellow come up to tell us dinner is ready ; so come along, or you’ll be where the little boat was—a long way astern.”

CHAPTER III.

THE admiral was very kind to me, and shook hands with me when I left him. I returned on board of the Manilla, took leave of the surgeon, and master, and other officers, and then of all my messmates, and a boat was manned to take Bob Cross and me on board of the Firefly. After the boat shoved off, and was a little distance from the frigate, the men suddenly tossed up their oars.

“What are you about, men?” said I.

“Look there, Sir,” said Bob Cross, pointing to the frigate.

I turned round, and perceived all the men in the rigging, who gave me three cheers from a

pipe of the boatswain; a compliment which I had not dreamt of, and which moved me to tears. I rose, and took off my hat; the men in the boat returned the cheers, dropped their oars in the water, and rowed to the schooner. I stepped on board, ordered the hands aft, and read my commission, and then Cross's warrant; after which I went down into the cabin, for I wished to be alone.

I was now in command of a vessel, and not more than twenty years old. I reflected what a career was before me, if I was fortunate, and never neglected an opportunity of distinguishing myself; and I vowed that I never would, and prayed to Heaven to assist my endeavours. Lord de Versely's kindness to me had struck deep into my heart, and my anxiety was that he should be proud of me. And then I thought of the chances for and against me; he might marry and have children; that would be the worst thing that could happen to me: if he did not marry, his other brother had a large family,

and the title would go to the eldest son ; but that was nothing to me.

While I was summoning up all these contingencies in my mind, there was a knock at the cabin door. "Come in," said I. "Oh ! is it you, Cross ? I'm glad to see you. Sit down there. You see I command a vessel at last, Bob."

"Yes, Sir ; and you'll command a larger one before long, I hope ; but as to your being in command of a vessel—there's nothing very surprising in that ; what is surprising is, to find myself a warrant officer—the idea never came into my head. I must write, and tell my little girl of my good fortune ; it will make her and her mother very happy."

"I must do the same, Cross. My mother will be very much pleased to hear all I have to tell her."

"I haven't heard it myself yet, Mr. Keene, and that's why I came in," replied Bob. "I know you don't want advice now ; but I can't

help having a wish to know what took place between you and his lordship."

"No one has a better right to know than you, Cross, who have been such a sincere friend to me ; so now I'll tell you."

I then entered into a detail of all that had passed between Lord de Versely and me, and also what the admiral had said to me.

"All's right, Mr. Keene," replied Bob ; "and let the admiral only give us something to do, and I think you'll believe me when I say that the boatswain of the Firefly will back you as long as he has a pin to stand upon."

"That I am sure of, Bob ; you will ever be my right-hand man. There are two midshipmen on board, I perceive : what sort of lads may they be ?"

"I haven't had time to find out ; but you have a capital ship's company—that the gunner and carpenter both say."

"And a very fine vessel, Bob."

"Yes, Sir, and a regular flyer, they say, if

she is well managed. You have never been in a schooner, Mr. Keene, but I have, and for nearly three years, and I know how to handle one as well as most people."

"So much the better, Cross, for I know nothing about it. Come, I will ring the bell; I suppose some one will answer it. A lad made his appearance."

"Were you Mr. Williams's servant?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Get me out a bottle of wine and some glasses—there, that will do."

"Now, Bob, let's drink success to the Firefly."

"Here's success to the Firefly, Mr. Keene, and success to the captain. May you do well in her and be soon out of her."

"Thank you, Bob: here's your health, and may we long sail together."

Bob and I finished the bottle, and then we parted.

The next day, I was very busy in examining

my vessel and my ship's company. The schooner was a beautiful model, very broad in the beam, and very low in the water; she mounted one long brass 32-pounder forward on a circular sweep, so that it could be trained in every direction; abaft, she had four brass 9-pound carronades. My ship's company consisted of sixty men and officers; that is, myself, two mids, boatswain, gunner, and carpenter. The mids were young lads of about sixteen years of age, a Mr. Brown and a Mr. Black, gawky tall boys, with their hands thrust too far through the sleeves of their jackets, and their legs pulled too far through their trowsers—in fact, they were growing lads, who had nothing but their pay to subsist upon, being both sons of warrant officers. They bore very good characters, and I resolved to patronize them, and the first thing which I did was, to present them each with a new suit of uniform and a few other necessaries, so as to make them look respectable; a most unheard-of piece of patron-

age, and which it is therefore my boast to record. The fact is, I was resolved that my schooner should look respectable; my ship's company were really a very fine body of men, most of them tall and stout, and I had received a very good character of them from the officer who had invalided. I had taken all his stores and furniture off his hands, for I had plenty of money, and to spare.

As soon as I had examined my ship's company, I made them a speech, the which, although they were bound to hear it, I shall not inflict upon the reader, and I then went down and examined every portion of the vessel, ascertained what there was in her, and where every thing was. Bob Cross accompanied me in this latter duty, which was not over till dinner-time.

The next morning my signal was made, and I went up to the admiral.

“Mr. Keene,” said the admiral, “here are despatches to take down to the Governor of Curaçoa. When can you be ready?”

“Now, Sir,” replied I; “and if you will make the signal for the Firefly to weigh anchor, there will be so much time gained.”

“Very good, Keene; tell them to make the signal. You must make all the haste you can, as they are important. Here are your orders: after you have delivered your despatches, you will be allowed to cruize down in that quarter, as I understand there are some very mischievous vessels in that direction. I hope you will give me a good account of one or two of them if you fall in with them.”

“I will do my best, Sir,” replied I.

“Well, I sent you on purpose. I have ordered the senior officer at Curaçoa to forward the return despatches by the Mosquito, that you may have a chance. I won’t ask you to stay dinner, as it is an affair that presses, so of course you will carry a press of sail. Good-by, and I wish you success.”

I took my leave of the admiral and hastened down to the town. In an hour afterwards the

Firefly was driving along with a fine breeze on the quarter, and long before night the vessels in the harbour were not to be distinguished. The breeze freshened after the sun went down, and I remained on deck, carrying on to the last moment. Bob Cross once or twice ventured to say, that we had better reduce the sail ; but I told Bob that the admiral was very anxious that I should make a quick passage.

“ Yes, Mr. Keene ; but ‘ turning the turtle ’ is not making a quick passage, except to the other world, and the admiral does not wish his despatches to go there. She is a fine boat, Sir, but there may be too much sail carried on a good vessel : the men say she never has been so pressed before.”

“ Well, you are right, Bob, and so we will take a little off her.”

“ Yes, Sir ; it’s my watch coming on now, and I will carry all she can bear with safety, and I think she will go quite as fast as she does now.

We shall have more wind yet, Sir, depend upon it."

"Well, so long as it is fair, I don't mind how much," replied I. "Send the watch aft."

We reduced the sail, and then I went down to bed.

At daylight I awoke and went on deck. The carpenter had the watch, for the watches were entrusted to the warrant officers, who were all good seamen, and accustomed to the schooner. I found that the wind had freshened, but was steady from the same quarter, and the schooner was darting through the water at a tremendous rate.

"She sails well, Mr. Hayter," said I.

"Yes, Sir, that she does," replied he; "and never sailed better than she does now. I was a little alarmed for my sticks last night, until you shortened sail."

"Admiral's order to carry a press of sail, Mr. Hayter."

“ Well, Sir, then by Jove you obey orders ; you half frightened the men, although they had been so long in the vessel.”

I felt, by what the carpenter had said, that I had been rash. Neither he nor Bob Cross would have ventured so much if I had not been so ; and they understood the vessel better than I did, so I resolved to be guided by them until I felt able to judge for myself. Notwithstanding that sail was afterwards carried more prudently, we had a most remarkably rapid passage ; for we took the breeze with us down the whole way, not seeing a vessel during the run. I had another cause of impatience, which was, to ascertain if Mr. Vanderwelt and Minnie had left the island.

On my arrival, I went first to the naval commanding officer, and then to the governor's, delivering my credentials. They complimented me on my having been so active. I accepted the governor's invitation to dinner, and then went to inquire after Mr. Vanderwelt. I

walked first to his house, but found it occupied by a Scotch merchant, who, however, was very polite. He stated that he was an old friend of Mr. Vanderwelt, and could give me every information, as he had received letters from him very lately ; and that in those letters Mr. Vanderwelt had informed him that I had said, in my last letter to them, that I was again on the West India station, and had requested him, if I came to the island, to shew me every attention. “ So, my dear Sir,” continued Mr. Fraser, “ I trust you will enable me to comply with my friend Mr. Vanderwelt’s injunctions, and consider this house as your home during your stay here.”

I thanked Mr. Fraser and accepted the offer. I sent for my portmanteau, and slept there that night after I had dined with the governor. At dinner I met Captain C——, who told me he had orders to send me on a cruize, and asked when I would be ready. I replied, that I should like a day or two to lift my rigging

and overhaul it, as I had been very much strained in my passage down.

“No wonder,” replied he; “you must have flown—indeed, your log proves it. Well, I will send you as soon as you are ready. The Naiad sloop is out, and so is the Driver brig, both in pursuit of three vessels, which have done a great deal of mischief. One is a French brig of fourteen guns, very fast, and full of men. She has her consort, a large schooner, who is also a regular clipper. The other vessel is a brigantine, a very fine vessel, built at Baltimore—of course, under French colours: she cruizes alone. I don’t know how many guns she carries, but I suspect that both she and the brig will be too much for you; and unless you could catch the schooner away from her consort, you will not be able to do much with the Firefly.”

“I will do my best, Sir,” replied I. “I have a very fine set of men on board, and, I think, very good officers.”

“Well, at all events, if you can’t fight, you have a good pair of heels to run with,” replied Captain C——; “but dinner’s announced.”

I left early, that I might have some conversation with Mr. Fraser. On my return, we sat down to some sangorie and cigars; and then he told me that Mr. Vanderwelt had left Curaçoa about nine months before, and that my last letter directed to him had been forwarded to Holland. He had often heard the history of my saving their lives on board of the pirate vessel from Mr. Vanderwelt, who made it a constant theme of his discourse; “and,” added Mr. Fraser, “you do not know what a regard he has for you.”

“And little Minnie, Sir?” inquired I: “it is now nearly five years since I saw her.”

“Little Minnie is no longer little Minnie, Mr. Keene, I can assure you. She was *fifteen* when she left the island, and had grown a tall and very beautiful girl. All the young men

here were mad about her, and would have followed her not only to Holland, but to the end of the world, I believe, if they thought that they had the least chance ; but, from my intimacy with the family, I tell you candidly, that I think if you were to meet again, you would not have a bad one ; for she talks incessantly of you when alone with her father : but I must not divulge family secrets."

"I fear there is little chance of my meeting again with her," replied I : "I have to carve my way up in my profession, and this war does not appear likely to be over soon. That I should like to see her and her father again, I grant ; for I have made but few friendships during my life, and their's was one of the most agreeable. Where is Mr. Vanderwelt settled ?"

"He is not in Holland—he is at Hamburgh. Well, there is no saying ; accident may bring you together again, as it did on board of the pirate ; and I hope it may."

Shortly afterwards, we went to bed. I must

say, his description of Minnie, which was given much more in detail than I have narrated to the reader, did prevent my going to sleep for a long while. Woman, as the reader may have seen, never once troubled my thoughts; I had fed upon one sole and absorbing idea, that of being acknowledged by Captain Delmar; this was and had been the source and spring of every action, and was the only and daily object of reverie; it was my ambition, and ambition in any shape, in whatever direction it may be led, is so powerful as to swallow up every other passion of the human mind; but still I had a strong affection for Minnie—that is, for little Minnie, as I saw her first, with her beautiful large eyes and Madonna countenance, clinging to her father. With the exception of my own relations, who were so much my seniors, I had had nothing to bestow my affections on; had not even made the acquaintance, I may say, of a woman, unless my casual intercourse with Bob Cross's Mary indeed might be so con-

sidered. A passion for the other sex was, therefore, new to me ; but although new, it was pleasing, and perhaps more pleasing, from being, in the present case, ideal ; for I had only a description of Minnie as she was, and a recollection of what she had been. I could therefore, between the two, fill up the image with what was to my fancy the ideal of perfection. I did so again and again, until the night wore away ; and tired out at last, I fell fast asleep.

The next day, after I had been on board of the schooner, and given my orders to Bob Cross, I returned to Mr. Fraser, and sat down to write to Mr. Vanderwelt ; I also wrote to Minnie, which I had never done before. That my night reveries had had an effect on me is certain, for I wrote her a long letter ; whereas, had I commenced one before my arrival at Curaçoa, I should have been puzzled to have made out ten lines. I told her I was sitting in the same chair, that I was sleeping in the same

room, that I could not look around me without being reminded of her dear face, and the happy hours we passed together ; that Mr. Fraser had told me how tall she had grown, and was no longer the little Minnie that used to kiss me. In fact, I wrote quite romantically as well as affectionately ; and when I read over my letter, wondered how it was that I had become so eloquent. I begged Mr. Vanderwelt to write to me as soon as possible, and to tell me all about their doings. I sealed my letter, and then threw myself back in my chair, and once more indulged in the reveries of the night before. I had a new feeling suddenly sprung up in my heart, which threatened to be a formidable rival to my ambition.

In two days the Firefly was ready, and I reported her as being so to Captain C—. He gave me my orders, which were to cruize for six weeks, and then to rejoin the admiral at Port Royal, unless circumstances should make me think it advisable to return to the island.

The boats of the men-of-war were sent to tow me out of the harbour, and I was once more on the wide blue sea—the schooner darting along like a dolphin.

For a fortnight we cruized without seeing any vessel but the Naiad. I was very much afraid that the captain would have ordered me to keep company ; but as he considered his vessel quite a match for the brig and schooner if he should fall in with them, and did not want the prize-money to be shared with the crew of the Firefly, he allowed me to go my own way, saying to me, laughingly, as I went over the side, “ They will certainly take you if they meet you, and we shall have to recapture you.”

“ Well, I hope you will not forget your promise, Sir,” replied I ; “ I shall depend upon you.”

During the fortnight that I had been out, I had taken great pains in exercising the men at their guns, the great gun particularly ; and I

had had an excellent sight put on it, which it had not, and very much required. During two or three days' calm, I had fired shot at a mark for three or four hours each day, and I found that the men, with this little practice, were very expert, and could hit a very small object, now that the sight was put on the gun. The two best shots, however, were the gunner and Bob Cross.

The night after we parted from the Naiad, I had run to the southward, having heard from the captain that the Driver was more to the northward than he was. There was nothing in sight on the next day, and when the evening set in, the wind being very light, and water smooth, I said to Cross, "Suppose we furl sail at night—it is just as good as running about; we then shall see them if they come in our way, and they will not see us?"

"A very good idea, Mr. Keene; we must keep a good look-out, that's all."

I followed up my own suggestion; we

furled the sails, and leaving two men with the officer of the watch to keep a sharp look-out, allowed the rest of the ship's company to remain in the hammocks during the whole of the night.

When day broke we had two look-out men at the mast-head, but remained with our sails furled as before, for the same reason, that we should discern a vessel by her sails long before she could discover us. The more I thought of it, the more convinced I was of the advantage to be gained by following up this plan. I was on the exact cruizing ground I wished to be, and therefore could not do better while the weather remained so fine.

CHAPTER IV.

FOR four nights and three days we remained in this way; during which my men had nothing to do but to exercise at the guns, and of that I took care they should have a good spell. On the fourth night the wind was a little fresher, but the water quite smooth. I had turned in about twelve o'clock, and had been asleep about an hour, when Cross came, and called me.

“Well, Cross,” said I, “what is it?”

“Here they are, Sir.”

“What?—the privateers?”

“Yes, Sir; the brig and schooner both coming down right before the wind; they are

on our weather quarter, and will pass us within two miles, if not nearer."

I left my bed-place, and was dressed in a minute. I went on deck with my glass, and directed it to the vessels, which were quite plain to the naked eye.

"Put out the binnacle light, Cross," said I; "they might discover us."

The brig, which was the headmost of the two vessels, was now nearly crossing our stern. The schooner was about a mile astern of her.

"Turn the hands up, Cross; see all ready for action and making sail."

"Not yet, Sir, surely!"

"No, not yet; we will let them run two or three miles dead to leeward, and then follow them till daylight, or till they see us, when, of course, they will be after us."

"It's very fortunate, Sir, that we did furl the sails; for had they come down, and we under sail, they would have seen us, and we should have been to leeward of them, which

would have given us a poor chance against such odds; now we shall have the weather-gage, and may choose; if our heels are as good as theirs, which, I expect they are, if not better."

"I shall fight them in some shape or another, Bob, you may depend upon it."

"Of course you will, Mr. Keene, or you'll disappoint us all. The ship's company have every confidence in you, I can tell you."

"Thanks to your long yarns, Bob, I presume."

"Thanks to my telling the truth, Mr. Keene. The schooner is right astern of us now, so there's the weather-gage gone—thank God!"

We remained as we were till I considered the two vessels sufficiently to leeward, and the sails were then set upon the Firefly, and first running to the eastward, so as to get right in the wind's eye of them, I put the helm up, and followed them. We had continued our course

in their wake for about an hour; when day dawned, and the schooner, who had discovered us, fired a gun, as a signal to her consort.

“ So you’ve found us out at last, have you ? ” said Bob Cross ; “ at all events, we keep a better look-out than you do, old fellow.”

Shortly after the gun was fired, both vessels hauled to the wind on the larboard tack, and we did the same; being about four miles to windward of the schooner and five or five and a half of the brig, we could now examine our adversaries. The schooner was, apparently, about the same tonnage as the Firefly, a very beautiful vessel, with her masts raking over her stern. She was painted black, and we could not ascertain, at first, how many guns she carried, as her ports were shut; but after a short time she knocked out her half ports to prepare for action, and then we discovered that she carried twelve guns, but not a long gun on a swivel, like the one on board of the Firefly. I observed this to Cross, who replied, “ Then,

Sir, all we have to do now is to try our rate of sailing with them, and if we are faster than they are we have not much to fear—unless we lose a spar, indeed; but luck's all, Mr. Keene. The schooner has more sail on her than we have; shall we set exactly the same?"

"No, Cross, for I think we have fore-reached upon her already, and if we can beat her with less sail set it will do just as well. I think that the breeze is steady; if any thing, we shall have more than less of it."

For an hour we continued running on the same tack with them, by which time we found that we had not only brought the schooner one point abaft our beam, but had weathered her at least half a mile. We therefore were fully satisfied that we sailed better than the schooner. With the brig it was not so. Although we had brought the schooner two points abaft our beam, the brig was much in her former position, being still half a point abaft our beam, and moreover had come up much

closer to the schooner, proving that we had neither weathered her nor fore-reached upon her. As near as we could judge, our sailing with the brig was much upon a par. Having ascertained this point more satisfactorily by allowing another hour of trial, I desired the men to get their breakfasts, while I and the officers did the same, and as soon as that was done I ordered the Firefly to be kept away—edging down till within good range of our long brass thirty-two-pound gun—that is, about one mile and a half—when we again hauled our wind and hoisted the English colours.

The tri-colour was immediately thrown up by the two Frenchmen, and a shot was fired at us by the schooner: it fell exhausted into the water about half a cable's length from us.

“Now, Cross,” said I, “see if we can't return the compliment with a little better success.”

Cross, who had been training the gun, and had his eye on the sight, waited for a second

or two, and fired : we saw the shot pass through the first reef of his main-sail, and dash into the water to leeward of him.

“ Very good that, Cross ; but hull him if you can.”

The schooner now returned the fire with the whole broadside, apparently twelve-pounders ; but they did not throw so far as our long thirty-two-pounder, and no shot went over us, although one fell close under the stern. At the distance, therefore, that we were, we had every thing in our favour, and my object was to dismantle the schooner before any chance enabled the brig to assist her. We continued to fire at her, taking the greatest pains in our aim, for the next hour, during which we ascertained that we had hulled her more than once, and had very much cut up her spars and rigging. She continued to return the fire, but without effect. One or two shots hit us, but their force was so much spent by the distance they were propelled, that they did not enter

the sides. At last a shot fired by the gunner did the job; it struck her foremast, which shortly afterwards went by the board. The Fireflies gave three cheers at this good fortune.

“She’s done for, Sir,” said Cross. “Now for the brig—we must try what metal she carries.”

“Stop a bit,” said I, “Cross; we must give the schooner a little more before she gets away. They have lowered down the main-sail, and I presume intend getting up some head-sail, so as to pay off and run under the lee of the brig for shelter. Put the helm up, and run down so as to keep the schooner about two points on our larboard bow. Get the gun round, and pitch it into her.”

As we had supposed, the schooner got a stay up from her bowsprit and to her mainmast-head, and hoisted a fore and aft sail upon it that she might pay off and run down to her consort for support; but as we ran three feet to her one, and now stood directly for her, we

were enabled to get close to her and put several shot into her from our long gun as we advanced. She did not attempt to round to, to give us her broadside, and our raking shot must have had great effect. When within half a mile of her we rounded to, and gave her our broadside ; for had we followed her any further, we should have been closer to the brig than might be agreeable. Indeed we were nearer than we thought, for she had continued to hug the wind, and was so weatherly, that she was not more than a mile to leeward of us when we rounded to the wind again ; but as she had fore-reached upon the schooner, she was distant from us about two miles. As we rounded to, the brig tacked, and we immediately did the same, and we now had a fair trial of sailing with her.

“Cross, let the men go down and get what they can to eat,” said I, “and get up the grog ; we shall have plenty of work before the night is over, I expect.”

“ We must make a running fight of it, Sir, I expect, for she is too heavy for us.”

“ I shall try her the same way as the schooner, Cross,” replied I. “ If I can only knock away some of her spars without losing my own, I shall then be able to do something ; if, on the contrary, we lose our spars, and she gets alongside of us, why then we must fight to the last.”

“ I consider that schooner as our own,” replied Bob ; “ she must haul down her colours when no longer protected by the brig.”

“ Yes ; I was afraid that she would run away to leeward altogether ; but I see she has rounded to, and is no doubt getting up a jury fore-mast.”

I allowed the men to remain an hour at their dinner, and then they were summoned up. During the hour, we found the rate of sailing between us and the brig so nearly balanced, that it was impossible to say which had the best of it.

“Now, my lads, we will wear round, and get a little closer to this fellow, and see what we can do with him.”

The men were full of spirits and hope, and were as anxious to decide the question as I was. In ten minutes we passed the brig within a mile on opposite tacks, and had given her our long gun three times, and had received her broadside.

“He has long twelve-pounders, I think, Sir,” said Cross; “smart guns, at all events. There’s a fore shroud and a backstay gone, but that’s no great matter.”

As soon as the brig was three points abaft the beam, we tacked, and recommenced firing. Not a shot was thrown away by my men: I believe the brig was hulled every time, nor was her fire without effect upon us. Our rigging was much cut up; several of her shot had gone through our sails, and we had two men hurt. I was annoyed at this, as we had no surgeon on board. The assistant-surgeon who had

belonged to the schooner was at the hospital, and there was not one to replace him when we sailed. However, we had one of the men belonging to the hospital, a sort of dispenser, who knew very well how to manage any thing that was not very serious.

The breeze had gradually died away, and we did not go more than three miles through the water ; and as our sails were much torn, we did not hold so good a wind. The consequence was, that the distance between us and our antagonist was, by two o'clock, decreased to half a mile, and the fight became very warm. Our broad-side guns were now called into play, and assisted us very much, as we directed them chiefly at her sails and rigging, while our long thirty-two-pounder was fired at her hull, pointed below her water line. She had the advantage in number of guns certainly, but our large shots from the long gun were more destructive.

About three we knocked away her foretopmast, which enabled us to shoot ahead about a

quarter of a mile, and increase our distance, which was a boon to us, for we latterly had suffered very much. We had eight men wounded and one of my poor middies killed, and we had received several shot in the hull: now that we had increased our distance, we had a better chance, as our long gun was more effective than those of the brig. At five o'clock it fell dead calm, and both vessels lay with their heads round the compass; this was also in our favour, as we could train our long gun on its circular bend, in any direction we pleased; but the brig contrived, by getting sweeps out of her bow ports, to bring her broadside to bear upon us, and the action continued till night closed in.

CHAPTER V.

As it may be supposed, my men were completely worn out with the fatigue and excitement of the day, and Cross said, "There's no saying how this will end, Mr. Keene; but, at all events, we have not the worst of it at the present."

"No, Bob," replied I. "I wish the men were not so knocked up."

"Oh, as for that, Sir, I'll answer for it, that if you serve out some more grog, make them eat half a biscuit at the tub before they drink it, and make them a little bit of a speech, that they'll go on for twenty-four hours more."

"If that will have the effect, I'm sure I'll

try it," replied I. "Which shall they have first?"

"Oh, biscuit first, grog next, and then a speech afterwards."

"That fellow has not fired for this last five minutes; perhaps he wishes to put it off till to-morrow morning, but I'll not; so get up the grog, make it pretty strong, and I'll get something to eat myself, for I have had nothing to eat all day."

As soon as the ship's company had had their refreshment, I sent for them aft, and said, "My lads, you have behaved very well, and I am much obliged to you. We have had hard work, and I dare say you are tired enough; but I will tell you what my opinion is: I think that we have peppered that Frenchman very well, and I am convinced that you have put a good many shots into him between wind and water. Now, that he is anxious to leave off fighting till to-morrow morning, that he may stop his leaks and repair his damages, I have no doubt; indeed,

he proves it by his having ceased to fire. For the very reason that he wants to leave off, I wish to go on; for he is much heavier armed than we are, and sails as well; and if we permit him to get all right and all at aunt by to-morrow morning, he may prove a very awkward customer yet. Now, what I propose is this, that we should first get up fresh sails, and bend them, and then renew the action through the night. There will be no occasion for all of you to be on deck; we will fight the schooner watch and watch till daylight."

"That's my opinion, Mr. Keene," said Bob Cross.

"And mine," replied the carpenter.

"And of all of us, Mr. Keene," replied the ship's company with one voice.

"Then, my lads, let's work hard, and when we have settled that fellow, we shall have plenty of time to sleep."

The men now set to with good-will; the spare sails were got up, and those which were

shattered by the enemy unbent and replaced. The new sails which we had bent we furled—it was a dead calm—and then we recommenced our fire, for we were nearer to her than when we ceased firing, and could distinguish her very well. We fired the long gun four times before she returned a shot; she then opened very briskly, but none of her shots did us any damage; our sails being furled, prevented her distinguishing us so well as we could her. After a time, we manned the small guns on our broadside and worked them, for our large gun was so hot, that it was necessary to let it cool before we could re-load it. At last one of their shots came in through the bulwarks; the splinters wounded me and the carpenter, but I was not so much hurt as to oblige me to leave the deck. I bound up my leg with my handkerchief; the carpenter, however, was taken down below.

“Are you much hurt, Sir?” said Bob Cross.

“ Oh, no ; the flesh is lacerated a good deal, but it is not very deep.”

“ There’s a little wind springing up, Sir, from the right quarter,” said Bob.

“ I’m glad to hear it,” replied I, “ for it will soon be daylight now.”

At this moment another shot struck the hammock rail, and a piece of it about two feet long was sent with great force against Bob Cross’s head ; he was stunned, if not worse, and fell immediately. This was a severe blow to me as well as to poor Bob. I desired two of the men who were abaft to take him down into my cabin, and do all they could for him, and ordered the men to quit the broadside guns, and renew their fire with the long 32-pounder. In a quarter of an hour afterwards, the breeze came down very strong, and I resolved to shoot ahead, farther off from my antagonist, as I should have a better chance by using my long gun at a greater distance. The sails were set, and the schooner went

fast through the water, leaving the brig, who had also the benefit of the breeze; and for a time the firing again ceased. On reflection, I determined that I would wait till daylight, which would appear in less than half an hour, before I renewed the action.

I contrived with some difficulty—for my leg was so numbed that I could scarcely feel that I had one—to go down into the cabin and see Bob Cross. He was recovering, but very wild and incoherent. As far as I could judge, his skull was not injured, although the splinter had torn off a large portion of the scalp, and he was drenched with his blood. At all events, he could be of no further assistance to me at present, nor could I be to him, so I regained the deck, and sat down abaft, for my leg had become so painful that I could not stand but for a few minutes.

At last the day dawned, and I could distinctly make out both brig and schooner. I was about a mile and a half distant from the

brig; she had, since the wind sprung up, driven a mile ahead of the schooner, who had contrived to get up a jury-mast during the night; but as she could not stir without reducing her after-sail, she had close-reefed her main-sail, so that she could make but little progress. The brig was very much cut up in her sails and rigging, and I saw at once that I had now the advantage in sailing; I therefore wore round and stood towards them; the brig did the same, and went down to the schooner that she might have her support. We immediately recommenced firing with our long gun, and as soon as we were within a mile, I hove to. The brig and schooner then both bore up and gave us their broadsides; they had just done so, when the midshipman who was on deck with me cried out, "A large sail coming down before the wind, Mr. Keene."

I caught up my glass. It was a sloop of war; the cut of her sails and rigging evidently

English. "It must be the Naiad," said I. "Well, I'm glad of it. We shall lose some prize-money; but at all events we require her surgeon, and that is of more consequence."

My men, who were quite tired out, were in great spirits at the appearance of a friend. The brig had set studding-sails; she had evidently seen the vessel to windward, and was now trying to escape, and the schooner was following her as well as she could. I immediately kept away in pursuit, and when I fired into the schooner she hauled down her colours. I did not wait to take possession, but followed the brig, who appeared to sail as well off the wind as she did when close hauled. Once or twice she rounded to return my fire, but afterwards she continued running before the wind, having got two of her guns aft, with which she attempted to cut away my rigging. In the meantime, the strange vessel to windward had hoisted English colours, and was bringing down with her a spanking breeze: fortunately it was so, for my foretopmast

was knocked away by the fire of the brig, and I now dropped fast astern.

We had scarcely got up a new foretopmast and set sail again, when the Naiad, who had exchanged numbers with me, passed the schooner without taking possession of her, and was very soon not a mile from us. In half an hour she was alongside, and, hailing me to haul my wind and take possession of the schooner, continued in chase of the brig. I obeyed my orders, and by the time I had put my men on board of the schooner, the brig had hove to and hauled down her colours to the Naiad.

We ran down to her in company with the prize, and then sent a boat requesting immediate surgical attendance. The Naiad's surgeon and his assistant were brought on board in one of the sloop-of-war's boats, and a lieutenant, to obtain from me the particulars of the action, which I gave to him. The lieutenant told me that they had heard the firing about one o'clock in the morning, and had in consequence bore up ;

but the brig had so many shot in her, and was making so much water, that they were almost afraid that they would not be able to get her into port. But I was now quite faint with the pain of my wound and exhaustion, and was carried below to have it dressed. All our men had been attended to, and I was glad to hear that Bob Cross was in no danger, although his wound was very severe. The surgeon's assistant was allowed to remain on board, and the captain of the Naiad sent all my men back and manned the prizes, giving me orders to keep company with him. As soon as my wound was dressed, and I was put into my bed, I felt much relieved, and soon afterwards fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER VI.

THE prizes proved to be the *Diligente* brig, of fourteen guns and two hundred and ten men, and *Caroline* schooner, of eight guns and one hundred and twenty men; they had done a great deal of mischief, and their capture was of importance. The captain of the *Naiad*'s orders were to return to Curaçoa, and we all made sail before sunset. Our loss had been severe: commanding officer, boatswain, carpenter, and twelve men wounded—midshipman and two men killed.

The next morning our signal was made to pass within hail, and the captain of the *Naiad* inquired how I was. The surgeon's assistant

replied that I and all the wounded were doing well, and there was no more communication till we arrived at Curaçoa on the fourth day, by which time I was rapidly recovering.

Mr. Fraser, as soon as he heard of my being hurt, immediately came on board and insisted upon my being taken on shore to his house, and I gladly consented. The next day, I had a visit from Captain C., the commanding officer, and the captain of the *Naiad*. Captain C. asked me if I was well enough to write the account of the action. I replied that I was, and that I would send it the next day. He and the captain of the *Naiad* both paid me many compliments for having fought a superior force for so long a time; and Captain C. said, that as soon as I was well enough he would send me up to Jamaica, as bearer of my own despatches to the admiral.

I requested as a particular favour of Mr. Fraser, that he would allow Bob Cross to be sent ashore to his house, and Mr. Fraser imme-

diately consented. My friend Bob was therefore brought up that evening, and was soon established in very comfortable quarters.

We had been a fortnight at the island, during which my wound was healing rapidly, and I was able to hop about with a crutch. Cross also was out of bed, and able to sit up for an hour or two in the verandah, in the cool of which I spent the best part of the day, with my wounded limb resting upon a sofa. From the verandah we had a view of the harbour, and one morning I perceived that there were two additional vessels which had anchored during the night; they proved to be the *Driver* and the brigantine privateer, which she had captured after a chase and running fight of forty-eight hours. I was glad of this, as I knew what pleasure it would give to the admiral.

I now again indulged in my dreams of Minnie, who had been forgotten as soon as I had left the harbour and been engaged in

active service. Stretched upon a sofa, with my wounded leg, I had nothing else to do, or rather nothing else which was so agreeable to me. I wrote to her again, and also to my mother, neither did I forget that Lord de Versely had requested at parting that I should write to him. I did so in a very respectful manner, detailing what had occurred.

When we had been three weeks at Curaçoa, all our wounded, as well as myself, had so far recovered, that there was no reason for the *Firefly* not proceeding to Jamaica. The commanding officer lent an assistant-surgeon to the schooner. I received my despatches, took a grateful leave of Mr. Fraser, and the *Firefly* was once more skimming over the water. In three weeks we arrived at Port Royal, and I took up my despatches.

“Happy to see you, Keene,” said the admiral. “Hollo! what makes you limp in that way? Have you hurt your leg?”

“Yes, Sir,” replied I; “I’m not quite well

yet, but the despatches of Captain C. will explain all."

As no vessel had sailed from Curaçoa, the admiral had no idea of what had happened.

"Well, then," said he, "sit down on that sofa, Mr. Keene, while I read the despatches."

I watched the admiral's countenance, and was delighted to witness the evident signs of satisfaction which he expressed as he read on.

"Excellent!" said he, as he closed them. "Keene, you have done me a great favour. The remonstrances of the merchants, the badgering I have received from the Admiralty by every packet, relative to the depredations on our commerce by these vessels, have been enough to make a saint swear. Now they are happily disposed of, and I have chiefly to thank you for it. Captain C. informs me that the brig is well adapted for his Majesty's service, but the schooner is an old vessel." The admiral then left the room. In a few minutes he returned with a paper in his hand, which he laid

upon the table, and, taking up a pen, he signed it and presented it to me, saying—

“*Captain* Keene, I trust you will give me the pleasure of your company to dinner; and, as you are still very lame, I think you had better make a signal for your servant and traps, and take up your quarters at the Penn till you are quite recovered.”

Perceiving that I was too much agitated to reply, he continued, “I must leave you now;” then extending his hand, he said, “Allow me to be the first to wish you joy on your promotion, which you have so well deserved.” He then went out of the room. It really was so unexpected—so little dreamt of, this sudden promotion, that I was confused. I had hoped that, by a continuance of good conduct, I might in a year or two obtain it; but that I should receive it after only one cruize in the schooner was beyond all my imagination. I felt grateful, and as soon as I was more composed, I returned thanks to Heaven, and vowed

eternal gratitude to the admiral. I felt that I was a step nearer to Lord de Versely, and I thought of the pleasure it would give my mother and Minnie. I had been alone about half an hour, when the admiral returned.

“ I have just sent for an old messmate of yours, Captain Keene, who was severely wounded in your action with the Dutch frigate ; he has now passed, and Lord de Versely recommended him to me as a deserving young officer—a Mr. Dott.”

“ Oh, yes, admiral ; he was my first acquaintance when I went to sea. He has been to sea longer than I have, but he lost a good deal of his time.”

“ Well, I am going to give him an acting order for your brig. I hope he is a good smart officer.”

“ Yes, admiral, he is a very good officer indeed,” replied I, laughing. “ Will you oblige me by not telling him that I am to be his captain, till after we have met ? ”

“Ah, some mischief, I suppose; but if we make captains of such boys as you, we must expect that. Are your wounded men all going on well?”

“All, Sir—even Bob Cross, the boatswain, whose head was half knocked off, is quite well again. He was Lord de Versely’s coxswain, Sir, and you were kind enough to give him his warrant.”

“I recollect—a good man, is he not?”

“So good, Sir, that the only regret I have in leaving the schooner is, that I cannot take him with me. He is my right-hand man, and I owe much to him, and it will be a sore blow to him as well as to me.”

“I see, you want him made boatswain of your brig—that’s it.”

“I assure you, admiral, I should be most grateful if you would have that kindness.”

“I am always ready to promote a good man; your recommending him, and his severe wound,

are sufficient. He shall be your boatswain, Keene."

"You are very kind, Sir," replied I. "I hope I shall do justice to your patronage."

"I've no fear of that, Keene, and I know that a man, to work well, should, as far as he can, choose his own tools. Mr. Dott is waiting now, and as soon as he has his acting order, I will send him in to you."

About ten minutes afterwards Mr. Tommy Dott made his appearance; he extended his hand to me, saying, in a haw-haw way, "Keene, my dear fellow, I'm glad to see you." He certainly did look two or three inches taller, for he walked almost on tiptoe.

"Glad to see you, Tommy," said I; "well, what's the news?"

"Nothing, I believe, except what you have brought. I hear you had a bit of a brush, and got winged."

"Even so, Tommy," replied I, pointing to

my wounded leg. "The admiral has kindly asked me to stay here until I'm better."

"I dine with him to-day," replied Tommy; "but as for staying here, I should think that rather a bore. By the bye, Keene, what sort of a craft is that Diligente brig which the Naiad and you took?"

"A very fine craft, Tommy: sails as well as the Firefly."

"Oh, you, of course, swear by your own vessel; and there's nothing like the schooner—that's natural enough: now, I must say, I prefer something a little larger, and, therefore, I'm not sorry that I have my commission for the new brig."

"Indeed! Tommy; I wish you joy," replied I.

"Thank ye, Keene," replied Tommy, very dignified. "I wonder," said he, "what sort of a skipper we shall have. There's the first lieutenant of the Naiad has a good chance. I

saw him : a very sharp sort of gentleman, and carries his head remarkably high ; but that won't do for me. I'll not allow any captain to play tricks in a ship that I'm aboard of. I know the rules and regulations of the service as well as any one, and that the captain shall see, if he attempts to go beyond his tether."

"Now, Tommy," replied I, "you know, that although you talk so big, if you had been appointed a lieutenant into a ship commanded by Lord de Versely, you would have been as much afraid of him as a lieutenant as you used to be as a midshipman."

"Lord de Versely," replied Tommy, who felt the truth of what I said : "he's a peculiar sort of man."

"Take my word for it, Tommy, you'll find all captains peculiar to one point ; which is, that they expect respectful behaviour, and not cavilling, from their officers ; and our service is so peculiar, that it is absolutely necessary that

the officers should set this example to the men."

"Yes; that may be very well; but who knows but the captain of the brig may be some young fellow, who has seen no more service than myself—perhaps, not been to sea so long?"

"That is no reason that you should not obey his orders; indeed, if not experienced, you ought to do all you can to support him."

"Well, if he was to ask my advice, indeed—"

"But he may not require your advice, Tommy; he may prefer deciding for himself. Now, that first lieutenant of the *Naiad* is a great Tartar, and I'm certain, if he is your captain, that, on the first word, he would have you under an arrest. There's an old saying, Tommy, 'It's folly to kick against tenpenny nails;' and that every officer does who kicks against his superior. I can assure you, Tommy, that if ever I am a captain, my

officers shall obey me implicitly. I will have no cavilling at my orders. I will always treat them as gentlemen, and support their authority as they ought to support mine ; but captain of my own ship I would be, and I suspect that it would go hard with any officer who ventured to dispute my rights."

" Well, I dare say you will be a martinet, or rather that you are one now, as you command a schooner. However, as I never intend to sail with you, that's nothing to me. I'm sure, from what has passed, that you and I should have a row before we were a week on board ; for I'm not to be played with."

" Well, Tommy, I'm very glad we have had this explanation : for now we both know what to expect. I am resolved to be captain, you to resist my authority."

" No, no, I don't say that—I only say that I won't be played with—I won't be trifled with."

“Tommy, I will neither play nor trifle with you, nor will you ever play or trifle with me. We have done that as midshipmen; in our new relative situations it is not to be thought of for a moment. Read this.” I handed him my appointment as commander of the *Diligente*: Tommy cast his eyes over it, and at once saw that his promotion did not prevent his getting into scrapes, as usual.

“You a commander! you captain of the *Diligente*! Why, I came to sea before you.”

“I know you did, Tommy; but, although you have been in the service longer, you have not seen quite so much service as I have. At all events, I’m now your captain. I flatter myself I shall make a very tolerable one; and what is more, I have an idea that you will make a very good lieutenant, as soon as the vanity, with which you have been puffed up since your receiving your promotion, will have settled down a little, and that you will find it

much pleasanter to be on good terms with your captain than to be eternally in hot water, especially with one who, you know, is not a person to be played with."

Tommy looked very confused: he said nothing, but kept his eyes on my commission, which he still held in his hand. I had no idea that Tommy Dott's being ignorant of my being captain of the brig would have occasioned such a conversation as this. I only wished to amuse myself with him, and surprise him at the last. Tommy perceived that he had made a mess of it, and he stammered out some explanation as he returned me the commission; and I replied: "The fact is, Dott, you were merely cutting a caper upon your new promotion; you never meant what you said; it was all talk. You always have been very obedient to proper authority since I have known you, and I am sure that you always will; so let's say no more about it. I wish you joy upon your promotion,

and, what's more, I'm very glad that we are to sail together." Saying this, I held out my hand, which Tommy took very readily, and we then began to talk on other subjects.

CHAPTER VII.

I HAD written to Cross, informing him of my promotion, and his being appointed to the *Diligente*.

I had been a fortnight with the admiral when the *Naiad* arrived with the prizes in company, and, my wound being now cured, I took leave of the admiral, and went down, that I might superintend the fitting out of my new vessel. As there were supernumerary men expected out of England, the admiral, at my suggestion, allowed me to turn over the crew of the *Firefly* to form the nucleus of my ship's company, and made up my complement from his own ship.

In two months I was ready for sea, and most anxious to be off. The admiral perceived my impatience, but, as there was no other vessel in the harbour, he would not let me go until another arrived, to be at his disposal in case of emergency. The weariness of so long remaining in harbour was, however, a little relieved by a circumstance which took place, and which probably will make my readers imagine that my propensity for playing tricks was not quite eradicated.

I lodged at a sort of hotel, kept by a mulatto woman of the name of Crissobella, as the negroes termed her, originally Christobella. She was of Spanish blood by the father's side, and had come down from the Havannah. She was very portly ; very proud and dignified in her carriage, and demanded as much attention from her lodgers as a lady would who had received us as her guests ; so that, to gain and retain admittance into her hostelry, it was necessary not only to pay a large bill, but com-

pliments to an equal amount. She was very rich, possessed numerous slaves, and was perfectly independent of keeping a hotel. I believe she preferred to have something for her slaves and herself to do, and moreover, probably, she felt that if she retired she should be thought a person of no consequence, whereas in her present position she received a great deal of attention. One thing was certain, that if those who lodged and boarded with her were very polite, and, on their return from any other place, brought her small presents, she was very indifferent as to their paying their bill; nay, to those who were her favourites, her purse was open, and a handful of doubloons was freely tendered, if required.

The living was the same as at a boarding-house. Breakfast was ready in the large hall by nine o'clock, and remained there until every one had come down at their own hour. Dinner was always ready at five o'clock, and then Crissobella presided at the table. She admitted

civilians, army officers, and navy, down to midshipmen ; but warrant officers and captains of merchant vessels were considered too low. On the whole, it was a very pleasant establishment, as the private rooms were well furnished, the slaves numerous, and the attendance very good. Considering the price of most eatables on that island, it could not be considered as very dear, although the wines, &c., made up a formidable bill at the end of the month.

This kind of exclusiveness on the part of Signora Crissobella made the hotel quite the fashion, and certainly it was by far the best in the town. The inmates of it at this time were, besides me, Lieut. Thomas Dott and Lieut. William Maxwell, both appointed to the *Diligente* ; three or four young civilians, on mercantile speculations from New York ; three midshipmen, who had been left behind on account of fever, and who were promising fair, by the life they were now leading, to be very soon sent to the hospital again ; and one or two

planters from the other islands. The latter and I were very well behaved, but the civilians were noisy, drinking and smoking from morning till night. The midshipmen were equally troublesome; and as for the new-made lieutenants, they were so authoritative and so disagreeable, and gave themselves such consequential airs, that Mammy Crissobella, as the slaves called her, was quite indignant—she had never had such a disorderly set in her house.

She complained to me, and I spoke to them, but that was of little use. I had no power over the young merchants, and the three midshipmen did not belong to my ship. As for my lieutenants, I could not say much at their giving themselves airs at a hotel, where they paid for what they had. It was not an offence that a captain could remonstrate upon. I therefore merely said, that Mammy Crissobella could not have them in her house, if they did not leave off their treatment of the slaves, and if they continued to give her so much trouble and annoy-

ance. At last our hostess would stand their behaviour no longer, and ordered them all to leave the hotel, sending in their bills ; but they all were unanimous in declaring that they would not go, and it was not very easy to use force on such occasions. I tried all I could to make matters right, but my efforts were of little avail. At last Mammy Crissobella became quite furious. She did not make any alteration in the meals, as that would be punishing all of us ; but she refused wine and spirits ; this they did not care for, as they sent for it elsewhere by their own servants, and there was nothing but noise and confusion all day long. Mammy often came to appeal to me, and wished to go to the governor, but I persuaded her not to do so ; and the mutiny continued, and every day there was nothing but altercation at the meals.

“ So help me God, gemmen, you no gemmen. You make wish me dead, dat you do. I tak obeah water some day. I not live like this,”

said Mammy Crissobella. "I take pepper-pot—I kill myself."

"Pray don't do that," replied Tommy Dott; we shall be put to the expense of mourning."

"And I shall weep my eyes out," continued one of the mercantile gentlemen.

"Weep your eyes out—is that all? I shall blow my brains out," said another.

"And I will lie down on your grave and die," said the third.

"Dat all very well, gemmen; you say dat and laugh—but I no slave. 'Pose I not get you out my house, I ab *vengeance*, now I tell you, so you look to that. Yes," continued Mammy Crissobella, striking the table with her fist, "I ab revenge."

"I have been thinking," said one of the mid's, "what I shall do if Mammy Crissobella takes pepper-pot; I shall marry Leila, and keep the hotel. Mammy, you'll leave me the plate and furniture."

Leila was the head female slave; a very well

featured young Mulatto girl, and a great favourite, as she was always laughing, always in good humour, and very kind and attentive. At this remark Leila laughed, and Mammy Crissobella, who observed her shewing her white teeth, cried out, "You laugh, you huzzy: what you laugh for, Leila? Get away—get out of room. I give you nice flogging by-by. You dare laugh—you take side against me, you nigger!"

I must here observe that Mammy Crissobella had been closeted with me for some time previous to this scene, and that Leila and the two planters were in the secret; this was, of course, unknown, and the hostess's anger appeared now to be extended towards me and the two planters, with whom she had been on good terms.

Shortly afterwards Mammy rose and left the room, and then I spoke to the party, and told them that they were driving the poor woman to extremities. The planters agreed with me, and we argued the case with them, but the majority

were, of course, against us, and the young merchants appeared to be very much inclined to be personal with me. At last I replied, "Very well, gentlemen—as you please; but as I happen to be well known both to the admiral and governor, I give you fair warning, that if this continues much longer, I will report the affair. I should be very sorry to do so; but the house is now very uncomfortable, and you have no right to remain when the landlady insists upon your going."

At this reply of mine, the naval portion of the guests were silent, but the civilians more insolent than before. I did not wish to come to open war, so I said nothing more, and left the table. After I was gone, the refractory parties made more noise than ever. Just before the dinner hour on the following day, Mammy Crissobella sent a circular round to the young men, stating that she could not receive them at dinner. They all laughed, and went down to table as before. The dinner was better than

usual, and they complimented Mammy upon it. Mammy, who had taken her seat with a scowl on her brow, and had not spoken a word, merely bowed her head in reply to their observations.

Dinner was over, and then Mammy desired Leila to bring her a goblet which was on the sideboard, and a small white jug which was in the *buffet*. She appeared much distressed, and hesitated a good deal, putting the goblet to her lips, and then putting it down on the table without tasting it. This conduct induced us all to look seriously at her. At last she took it up, sighed deeply, and drank the whole off at a draught. For a few seconds she held her hand over her forehead, with her elbows resting on the table. At last she looked up and said, "Gemmen, I got a little speech to make—I very sorry dat I not drink your health; but it no use—dat why you see me drink; I tell plenty time you make me mad—you make me drink obeah water—make me kill

myself. Now I ab done it—I drink pison water just now. In two hour I dead woman.”

At this communication, the truth of which appeared confirmed by the woman’s behaviour, all the company started from their chairs.

“Gemmen, I dare say you all very sorry ; you be more sorry by-and-by. Captain, I beg your pardon ; Mr. W. — Mr. G. (the two planters), I beg your pardon ; I not mean hurt you, but could not help it. Now I tell all company, all drink the pison water—because I not like die on the jibbit, I drink de pison water—Gemmen, your dinner all pison, and you all pisoned. Yes, all pisoned,” cried Mammy Crissobella at the highest pitch of her voice, and rushing out of the room.

At this announcement, I started from my chair and clasped my hands, as if in agony. I looked round me—never did I witness such a variety of horror as was expressed in the different faces at the hotel. The old planter, Mr. D., who sat next to me, and who was in the

secret as well as Mr. G., laid his head on the table with a groan. "The Lord have mercy on my sins," exclaimed Mr. G.; Mr. Lieutenant Maxwell looked me in the face, and then burst into tears; Mr. Lieutenant Dott put his fingers down his throat, and with three or four more getting rid of their dinner as fast as they could.

At last I sprang up to ring the bell; no one answered. I rang again more furiously. At last a slave appeared.

"Where's my servant?"

"Not here, Sar."

"Where's all the people of the house?"

"All with missy, Sar; Mammy Crissobella die."

"Run down then to the beach, and desire the surgeon of the brig to come up immediately."

"Yes, Sar," replied the negro, leaving the room.

"Oh, I feel it now—it's all here," exclaimed

I, putting my hand to my chest ; “ I’m suffocating.”

“ And so do I,” replied one of the midshipmen, weeping.

The girl Leila now entered the room in tears. “ Mammy dead,” said she. “ Oh ! Captain Keene, I very sorry for you ; you come with me, I give you something. I know how stop pison.”

“ Do you, Leila ? then give it me ; quick, quick.”

“ Yes, yes ; give it us quick.”

“ I not stuff enough, but I make more when I gib what I ab to Captain Keene. You all stay still, not move ; ’pose you move about, make pison work. I come back soon as I can.”

Leila then took my arm and led me tottering out of the room, when I went to Mammy Crissobella, and laughed till I cried ; but the punishment was not over. After remaining about ten minutes looking at each other, but

neither speaking nor moving, in pursuance of Leila's direction, with the utmost despair in their countenances, they were gladdened by the return of Leila with a large jug, out of which she administered a glass of some compound or another to each of them. I watched at the door, and the eagerness with which they jostled and pushed each other to obtain the dose before the rest was very amusing, and never did they swallow any liquor with so much avidity, little imagining that, instead of taking what was to cure them, they were now taking what was to make them very sick ; but so it was ; and in a few minutes afterwards the scene of groaning, crying, screaming, writhing with pain, was quite awful.

After a time, the slaves came in and carried them all to their respective beds, leaving them to their own reflections, and the violent effects of the drugs administered, which left them no repose for that night, and in a state of utter exhaustion on the following morning.

At daylight I went into Mr. Dott's room with the surgeon, to whom I had confided the secret. Tommy was a miserable object.

"Thank heaven! here is one still alive," said the surgeon to me.

"Oh! Captain Keene," said Tommy; "I'm glad to see that you are so well; but you had the remedy given you long before we had."

"Yes," replied I, "it was given me in good time; but I hope it was not too late with you."

"I feel very bad," replied Tommy. "Doctor, do you think I shall live?"

The doctor felt his pulse, and looked very grave; at last he said, "If you get over the next twelve hours I think you may."

"How many are dead?" inquired Tommy.

"I don't know; you are the first that I have visited; it's a shocking business."

"I've been thinking that we were very wrong," said Tommy; "we ought not to have

driven the poor woman to desperation. If I do recover, her death will be on my conscience."

"I'm glad to hear you say that, Tommy," replied I; "but the doctor says you must remain very quiet, and therefore I shall leave you. Good-by; I will see you again this evening."

"Good-by, Sir, and I hope you'll forgive me for not having been so respectful as I should have been."

"Yes, yes, Tommy; we have been friends too long for that."

Mammy Crissobella's dose had certainly put an end to all Tommy's spirit of resistance. All the others who had been victims to our plot were kept in the dark as to the real facts, and as soon as they were able to be moved, paid their bills to Leila and left the house.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON the third day, Tommy Dott and Mr. Maxwell went on board, imagining that they had had a miraculous escape, and the two old planters and I were left the only inmates of the house to welcome the resurrection of Mammy Crissobella, who was again as busy as before. She said to me, "Massa Keene, I really under great obligation to you; suppose you want two, three hundred, five hundred pounds, very much at your service; never mind pay back."

I replied that I did not want any money, and was equally obliged to her. But the affair had already made a great noise. It was at

first really supposed that Mammy Crissobella had poisoned them as well as herself, and I was obliged to refute it, or the authorities would have taken it up. As the admiral sent down to make inquiries, I went up to him and told him the whole story; I was obliged to do the same to the governor; and it was the occasion of great mirth all over the island, and of no small mortification to those who had been the sufferers. Mammy Crissobella was complimented very much upon her successful stratagem to clear her house, and she was quite in ecstasies at the renown that she obtained.

One day the admiral sent for me, and said—
“Keene, I can wait no longer the arrival of another vessel. I must send you to England with despatches: you must sail to-morrow morning.”

As I was all ready, I took my leave of the admiral, who promised me every assistance, if on his station, and his good word with the Ad-

miralty, and said that he would send down my despatches at daylight. I went on board, gave the necessary orders, and then returned to the hotel to pack up my portmanteau and pay my bill: but Mammy Crissobella would not hear of my paying any thing, and as I found that she was beginning to be seriously angry, I gave up the point. So I gave the old lady a kiss as a receipt-in-full, and another to Leila, as I slipped a couple of doubloons into her hand, and went on board. The next morning, shortly after daylight, the despatches were on board, and the *Diligente* was under all the sail she could carry on her way to England.

The *Diligente* sailed as well as ever, and we made a very quick passage. I found my ship's company to be very good, and had no trouble with my officers. Tommy Dott was very well behaved, notwithstanding all his threats of what he would do. It was therefore to be presumed that he was not very ill treated.

We were now fast approaching the end of our

passage, being about a hundred miles to the S.W. of the Scilly Islands, with a light wind from the southward, when, in the middle watch, Bob Cross, who had charge of it, came down, and reported firing in the S.E. I went up, but although we heard the report of the guns, we could not distinguish the flashes. I altered our course to the direction, and we waited till daylight should reveal what was going on. Before daybreak we could see the flashes, and make out one vessel, but not the other. But when the sun rose the mystery was cleared off. It was a French schooner privateer engaging a large English ship, apparently an East-Indiaman. The ship was evidently a good deal cut up in her spars and rigging.

Bob Cross, who was close to my side when I examined them with my glass, said, "Captain Keene, that rascally Frenchman will be off as soon as he sees us, if we hoist English colours; but if you hoist French colours, we may get

down and pin him before he knows what we are."

"I think you are right, Bob," says I. "Hoist French colours. He will make sure of his prize then, and we shall laugh at his disappointment."

As Cross turned away to go aft, I perceived a chuckle on his part, which I did not understand, as there was nothing particular to chuckle about. I thought it was on account of the Frenchman's disappointment, when he found that we were not a friend, as he might suppose.

"Hadn't we better fire a gun, Captain Keene, to attract their attention?"

"Yes," replied I; "it will look as if we really were Frenchmen."

The gun was fired, and we continued to stand towards them with a good breeze. About seven o'clock we were within two miles, and then we observed the Englishman haul down her colours, and the schooner immediately went alongside, and took possession. I continued to

run down, and in half an hour was close to her. Calling up the boarders, I laid the brig alongside the schooner; as half her men were on board the Indiaman, they were taken by surprise, and we gained possession with very trifling loss on our side, much to the astonishment of the crew of the privateer, as well as that of the Indiaman.

The captain, who was on deck, informed me that they had engaged the schooner for nine hours, and that he had some hopes of beating her off, until he saw me come down under French colours, upon which he felt that further resistance was vain. I told him I was afraid the schooner would escape, if I had not deceived him, and complimented him upon his vigorous defence. The schooner was a very fine vessel, mounting fourteen guns, and of three hundred tons burthen. In fact, she was quite as large as the *Diligente*.

While we were handing the prisoners over to the brig and securing them, I accepted the

invitation of the captain of the Indiaman to go into the cabin with him, where I found a large party of passengers, chiefly ladies, who were very loud in their thanks for my rescue. In another hour we were all ready. I left a party on board the Indiaman to repair damages; and my surgeon to assist the wounded men, and hauled off the brig and schooner. The latter I gave into the charge of Tommy Dott, and we all made sail.

As I was walking the quarter-deck, delighted with my success, Cross, who had the watch, and was by my side, said, "I think, Captain Keene, you did very right in hoisting French colours."

"Why, yes, Cross," replied I; "she is a very fast sailer, that is evident, and she might have escaped us."

"That's not what I mean, Captain Keene."

"What then, Cross?"

"Why, Sir, I would not tell you why I wished you to hoist French colours at the time,

because I was afraid that, if I did, you would not have done so ; but my reason was, that it would make a great difference in our prize-money, and I want some, if you do not."

"Even then I could not imagine what Cross meant, for it never came into my head, and I turned round and looked at him for an explanation.

"Why, Captain Keene, if we had hoisted English colours, the schooner would have made sail and gone off, and, even if she had not done so, the Indiaman would have held out till we came down ; but as he hauled down his colours, and was taken possession of by the enemy, he now becomes a recapture, and I expect the salvage of that Indiaman will be of more value to us than two or three of such schooners."

"That certainly did not enter my head when I hoisted the colours, Cross, I must confess."

"No, Sir, that I saw it did not, but it did mine."

"It's hardly fair, Cross."

“Quite fair, Sir,” replied Bob. “The Company is rich, and can afford to pay, and we want it in the first place, and deserve it in the next. At all events, it’s not upon your conscience, and that schooner is such a clipper, that I really think we should have lost her, if she had run for it ; besides, as she is as strong as we are, we might have lost a good many men before we took her.”

“That’s very true, Bob,” replied I, “and satisfies me that I was right in what I did.”

The wind had sprung up much fresher from the westward, and we were now all three running with a fair wind, and as it continued, we did not put into Plymouth, but continued our course for Portsmouth, and on the third day, at a very early hour in the morning, anchored at Spithead.

CHAPTER IX.

As it was too soon to present myself to the admiral, I dressed, ready to go on shore, and hoisted the number of the *Diligente* as given by the admiral at Jamaica; but, as I expected, it was not known to the guard-ship, and there was much surmise among the early risers as to what might be the large ship, schooner, and brig-of-war, which had entered.

We had just finished the washing of the decks, and I was standing aft with Cross, who had the morning watch, when he observed to me, "Captain Keene, we are now at anchor as near as possible to where the *Calliope* was when you went adrift in the boat with poor Peggy.

Some difference between your situation now and then."

"Yes, Bob," replied I; "I was thinking the same when I was dressing this morning, and I was also thinking that you would be very anxious to go on shore—so you may take a boat as soon as you please; I will order one to be given to you."

"Thankey, Sir; I am a little anxious to see the poor girl, and I think matters will go smooth now."

"I hope so, with all my heart. Let the gigs be all dressed and cleaned, and the boat manned at six bells. Pass the word for them to get their breakfast."

As it was better that I should wait for the admiral's getting up, than that he should wait for me, I was on shore, and up at the office at half-past seven o'clock, and found that the admiral was in his dressing-room. The secretary was there, and I delivered my orders and despatches, with which he went up to the

admiral. In about a quarter of an hour, he came down again with the port admiral's request that I would wait for him, and stay to breakfast. The secretary remained with me, extracting all the West India intelligence that I could give him.

As soon as the admiral made his appearance, he shook me warmly by the hand. "Captain Keene," said he, "I wish you joy : I see you are following up your career in the West Indies. We know you well enough by the despatches, and I am glad to be personally acquainted with you. This last business will, I have no doubt, give you the next step, as soon as you have been a little longer as commander. Mr. Charles, desire them to make the signal for the *Diligente* and schooner to come into harbour. The Indiaman may, of course, do as he pleases. Now then for breakfast."

The admiral, of course, asked me as many questions as the secretary, and ended, as I arose to take my leave, in requesting the pleasure of

my company to dinner on that day. As the reader may suppose, I had every reason to be satisfied with my reception.

As soon as I had left the admiral's office, I put into the post-office, with my own hands, my letter to my mother, and one to Lord de Versely. In the latter, I told him of my good fortune, and enclosed a copy of my despatch to the admiralty. Although the despatch was written modestly, still the circumstances in themselves—my having recaptured an Indiaman, and carried, by boarding, a vessel of equal force to my own, and superior in men—had a very good appearance, and I certainly obtained greater credit than I really deserved. It was not at all necessary to say that I hoisted French colours, and therefore took the schooner unawares, or that at the time most of her men were on board of the Indiaman; the great art in this world is to know where to leave off, and in nothing more than when people take the pen in their hands.

As soon as I had finished my correspondence—for I wrote a few lines to Mrs. Bridgeman, at Chatham, and a postscript to my mother's letter—I went down to the saluting battery, when I found that the two vessels were just entering the harbour. I went up and reported it at the admiral's office, and the admiral went on board of both vessels to examine them himself, and he ordered a dock-yard survey. They were both pronounced fit for his Majesty's service with the necessary dock-yard alterations. The crew of the *Diligente* were turned over to a hulk, preparatory to unrigging and clearing her out for dock. As soon as I left the admiral's house, I sat down at the George Hotel, where I had taken up my quarters, and wrote a long letter to Minnie Vanderwelt.

Cross called upon me the next morning. I saw by his countenance that he had good news to tell me. He had found his lady-love as constant as he could wish, and having explained to the blind old smuggler that he had been offered

and accepted the situation of boatswain in his Majesty's service during the time that he was in the West Indies, he had received his approbation of his conduct, and a warm welcome to the house whenever he could come on shore.

“I have not put the question to the old chap yet, Captain Keene,” said he, “but I think I will very soon.”

“Don't be in too great a hurry, Bob,” replied I. “Give the old fellow a little more 'baccy, and ask his advice as to what you are to do with your prize-money. You must also talk a little about your half-pay and your widow's pension.”

“That's very good advice, Captain Keene,” replied Cross. “Mercy on us! how things are changed! It appears but the other day that I was leading you down to this very hotel, to ship you into the service, and you was asking my advice, and I was giving it to you; and now I am asking your advice, and taking it. You have shot ahead in every way, Sir, that's sar-

tain ; you looked up to me then, now I look up to you."

I laughed at Cross's observation, which was too true ; and then we went into the dock-yard, and were very busy during the remainder of the day.

The following morning I received an answer from Lord de Versely, couched in most friendly terms. He complimented me on my success, and the high character which I had gained for myself during so short a career, and added that he should be happy to see me as soon as I could come to London, and would himself introduce me to the first lord of the Admiralty. He advised me to request leave of absence, which would be immediately granted, and concluded his letter, "Your sincere friend and well-wisher, De Versely."

As soon as I had laid down the letter, I said to myself, I was right—the true way to create an interest in a man like Lord de Versely is to make him proud of you. I have done well as

yet ; I will try to do more ; but how long will this success continue ? Must I not expect reverses ? May not some re-action take place ? and have I not in some degree deserved it ? Yes, I have used deceit in persuading him of my mother's death. I began now to think that that was a false step, which, if ever discovered, might recoil upon me. I remained a long while in deep thought. I tried to extenuate my conduct in this particular, but I could not ; and, to rid myself of melancholy feelings, which I could not overcome, I wrote a letter, requesting leave of absence for a fortnight, and took it myself to the admiral's office. This depression of spirits remained with me during the time that I remained at Portsmouth, when, having obtained leave, I set off for London, and on my arrival, put up at a fashionable hotel in Albemarle Street.

CHAPTER X.

THE next morning I called at Lord de Versely's, and sent up my card. I was immediately ushered up, and found myself in his presence. Lord de Versely rose from his sofa, and took my hand. "Keene, I am very glad to see you. I am proud that an *élève* of mine should have done me so much credit. You have gained all your rank in the service by your own merit and exertions."

"Not quite all, my Lord," replied I.

"Yes, all; for you are certain of your next step—they cannot well refuse it to you."

"They will not refuse your lordship, I have no doubt," replied I.

“Sit down, Keene; we will have a little conversation, and then we will go to the Admiralty.”

His lordship then asked me many questions relative to what had passed, and I entered into more detail than I had done in my letters. After an hour's conversation, carried on by him in so friendly, I may almost say affectionate, a style, as to make my heart bound with delight, the carriage was announced, and I accompanied his lordship down to the Admiralty. His lordship sent up his card, and was requested immediately to go up-stairs; he desired me to follow him, and as soon as we were in the presence of the first lord, and he and Lord de Versely had shaken hands, Lord de Versely said, “Allow me to introduce to you Captain Keene, whose name, at least, you have often heard of lately. I have brought him with me because he is a follower of mine; he entered the service under my protection, and continued with me until his conduct gave him his promotion. I have taken

this opportunity of introducing him, to assure your lordship that, during the whole time that he served with me as midshipman, his gallantry was quite as conspicuous as it has been since."

The first lord took me by the hand, and complimented me on my conduct.

"Captain Keene has strong claims, my Lord ; what can we do now for him?"

"I trust you will acknowledge that Captain Keene has earned his post rank, my Lord," replied Lord de Versely, "and I shall take it as a particular favour to myself if your lordship would appoint him to a frigate, and give him an opportunity of doing credit to your lordship's patronage."

"I think I may promise you both," replied the first lord ; "but when we meet in the house to-night, I will let you know what I can do."

After a few minutes' conversation, Lord de Versely rose, and we left the room. As soon as we were in the carriage, his lordship said,

“ Keene, you may depend upon it I shall have good news to tell you to-morrow, so call upon me about two o’clock. I dine out to-day with the Premier, but to-morrow you must dine with me.”

I took leave of his lordship as soon as the carriage stopped, and as I wished to appoint an agent, which I had not yet done, I had begged his lordship to recommend me one ; he gave me the address of his own, and I went there accordingly. Having made the necessary arrangements, I then employed the remainder of the day in fitting myself out in a somewhat more fashionable style than Portsmouth tailors were equal to.

The next morning, I sat down to write to my mother ; but, somehow or another, I could not make up my mind to address her. I had thought of it over and over, and had made up my mind, that in future I would always correspond with my grandmother ; and I now determined to write to her, explaining that such

was my intention in future, and requesting that all answers should be also from my grandmother. I commenced my letter, however, with informing her that I had, since I had last written, obtained leave of absence, and was now in London. I stated the kindness shewn me in every way by Lord de Versely, and how grateful I was to him. This continued down to the bottom of the first page, and then I said, "What would I not give to bear the name of one I so much love and respect! Oh! that I was a Delmar!" I was just about to turn over the leaf and continue, when the waiter tapped at the door, and informed me that the tailor was come to try on the clothes which I had ordered. I went into the bed-room, which opened into the sitting-room, and was busy with the foreman, who turned me round and round, marking alterations with a piece of chalk, when the waiter tapped at the bed-room door, and said Lord de Versely was in the sitting-room. I took off the coat which was

fitting as fast as I could, that I might not keep his lordship waiting, and put on my own.

Desiring the man to wait my return, I opened the door, and found his lordship on the sofa, and then for the first time, when I again saw it, recollected that I had left the letter on the table. The very sight of it took away my breath ; I coloured up as I approached his lordship ; I had quite forgotten that I had addressed my grandmother. I stammered out, “ This is an honour, my Lord.”

“ I came to wish you joy of your promotion and appointment to a fine frigate, Keene,” said Lord de Versely. “ I have just received this from the Admiralty, and as I have business unexpectedly come to hand, I thought I would be the bearer myself of the good news. I leave you the letter, and shall of course see you to dinner.”

“ Many thanks, my Lord,” replied I. “ I am, indeed, grateful.”

“ I believe you are, Keene,” replied his

lordship. By the bye, you leave your letters so exposed, that one cannot help seeing them. I see you are writing to your grandmother ; I hope the old lady is well?"

My grandmother ! Oh, what a relief to my mind it was when I then recollected that it was to my grandmother that I had written. I replied, that she was very well when I last heard from her.

" If I can be of any use in arranging your money affairs, Keene, let me know."

" I thank you, my Lord ; but I found that my agent perfectly understands his business," replied I ; " I will not trouble your lordship, who has so many important affairs to attend to."

" Very good," replied he ; " then now I'll leave you to read what I have given you, and I shall expect you at eight. Good bye." His lordship again shook me warmly by the hand, and left me.

I was quite giddy with the re-action pro-

duced upon my feelings ; when his lordship left the room, I dropped down on the sofa. I forgot the letter in my hand and its contents, and the tailor in the next room. All I thought of was the danger I had escaped, and how fortunate I was in not having addressed the letter to my mother, as I had at first intended. The agony which I felt was very great, and, as I remained with my hands covering my eyes, I made a vow that nothing should induce me ever to use deceit again. I then read over the letter : there was nothing but gratitude to Lord de Versely, and a wish that I had been born a Delmar. Well, if his lordship had run his eyes over it, there was nothing to hurt me in his opinion ; on the contrary, it proved that I was grateful, and I then recollected, that when I expressed my gratitude, he said he believed it. As for my saying that I wished my name was Delmar, it was nothing, and it let him know what my wishes were. On the whole, I had great cause for congratulation.

I was here interrupted by the tailor, who put his head out of the bed-room door. I went to him, and he finished his work, and promised me that I should have a complete suit at half-past seven o'clock in the evening, in time for dinner. I then returned to the sitting-room, and opened the letter which Lord de Versely had put into my hands. It was from the first lord, acquainting him that I might call at the Admiralty the next day, as my post-captain's commission was signed, and I was appointed to a thirty-two gun frigate, which would be launched in two or three months. Well, then, thought I, here I am, at twenty-three, a post-captain in his Majesty's service, and commanding a frigate. Surely, I have much to be thankful for. I felt that I had, and I was grateful to Heaven for my good fortune. Now I had but one more wish in the world, and that was, instead of being Captain Keene, to be Captain Delmar.

The reader may say, "What's in a name?"

True ; but such was my ambition, my darling wish, and it is ardent longing for any thing, the ardour of pursuit, which increases the value of the object so much above its real value. The politician who has been manœuvring all his life, does not perhaps feel more pleasure in grasping the coronet which he has been in pursuit of, than the urchin does when he first possesses himself of a nest which he has been watching for weeks. This would, indeed, be a dreary world if we had not some excitement, some stimulus to lead us on, which occupies our thoughts and gives us fresh courage, when disheartened by the knavery, and meanness, and selfishness of those who surround us. How sad is the analysis of human nature—what contradictions, what extremes, how many really brave men have I fallen in with, stooping to every meanness for patronage, court favour, or gain ; slandering those whose reputation they feared, and even descending to

falsehood to obtain their ends ! How many men with splendid talents, but with little souls !

Up to the present, I had run a career of prosperous success ; I had risen to a high position without interfering, or being interfered with by others, but now I had become of sufficient consequence to be envied ; now I had soon to experience, that as you continue to advance in the world, so do you continue to increase the number of your enemies, to be exposed to the shafts of slander, to be foiled by treachery, cunning, and malevolence. But I must not anticipate.

I remained in London till my leave was expired, and then went down to Portsmouth to pay off the brig, which had been ordered into dock, to be refitted for his Majesty's service.

CHAPTER XI.

THE *Circe*, thirty-two, to which I had been appointed, was a small but a very beautiful frigate, and as far as I could judge by her build as she laid on the stocks, had every requisite for sailing well.

When I took my leave of Lord de Versely, he told me that he should come down on the first of the following month (September) to Madeline Hall, where his aunt, Miss de Versely, was still flourishing in a green old age. "Here is a letter of introduction to her, Keene," said he, "as she has not seen you since you were a few months old, and therefore it is not very likely that she would recognize you."

Take my advice, and make yourself as agreeable to the old lady as you can ; you will find Madeline Hall a very pleasant place when you are tired of the dock-yard and the smell of pitch and tar."

I thanked his lordship, and we parted with much more cordiality shewn by him than I had yet experienced.

I hardly need say, that the first person who came to congratulate me on my arrival at Portsmouth was my old friend and adviser Bob Cross. "Well, Captain Keene," said Bob, as I shook him warmly by the hand, "I'm delighted at your success, and I know you will not be sorry to hear that I am getting on as well as I could wish in my small way ; Jane and I are to be married in a few days, and I hope you will honour me by being present at the wedding."

"That I will, Bob, with pleasure," replied I ; "let me hear all that has taken place."

"Why, Sir, it's told in a few words. I

took your advice, and brought the old gentleman presents, and I sat with him and heard all his old stories at least fifty times over, and laughed at his jokes as regularly the last time as the first; and he told Jane and her mother that I was a very pleasant, sensible, and amusing young man—although he had all the talk, and I had none. The fact is, Sir, it was he who first brought up the subject of my splicing his niece; that is to say, he hinted how he should like to see her well settled, and that if she married according to his wishes, he would leave her all he had.

“ Well, Sir, it was the opinion of Jane and her mother, that, as he was a whimsical, changeable old chap, it would be right for her to refuse me at first; and so she did, very much to the old man’s annoyance, who then set his mind upon it, and swore that if she did not marry me, he would not leave her a farthing. After a few days of quarrelling, Jane gave in, and the old chap swears that we shall be married

immediately, and that he will give us half his property down at once."

"Strike the iron while it's hot, Bob," replied I. "Is the day fixed?"

"Not exactly, Sir; but we are to be put up in church next Sunday, and it takes three Sundays. I hope you won't part with me, Sir," continued Bob. "The Diligente will be paid off on Tuesday, they say, and if you could get me appointed to the Circe--"

"Why, Cross, you are thinking of going to sea again, even before you are married. I should advise you not to be in such a hurry. You must not displease the old gentleman; besides, you must not leave a young wife so soon."

"That's very true, Captain Keene, but I don't think I should be comfortable if I knew you were afloat without me."

"I suppose you think that I cannot take care of myself."

"Yes, I do, Sir; but still I know that I

should fret ; and, Sir, it will be four months at least before the *Circe* is ready for sea, and I may just as well be appointed to her, and I can decide whether I do go to sea or not when the time comes."

" Well, Cross, I will certainly apply for you ; but if you take my advice, you will give up the sea altogether, and live on shore."

" I have nothing to do, Sir."

" Yes you have ; you have to cherish your wife, and look after the old gentleman."

" Well, he is rather shakey, they say, Sir ; the old woman is often called out to him at nights."

" Well, Cross, I will do as you wish, and time will decide how you are to act. I am going over to Southampton for a few days perhaps, and will take care to be back to the wedding. By the bye, have you heard any thing about prize-money ?"

" Yes, Sir ; it's payable for the *Diligente* and schooner, and all our recaptures in the

West Indies when we were in the Firefly. The Dutch frigate has been for distribution some time, but as I was only petty officer then, it won't come to much."

"Well, I can tell you that the government have taken the schooner we captured in the chops of the channel, and the East India Company have given us salvage for the ship. My agent has received already £7,400 on my account, which I have ordered to be purchased into the funds. As there were so few warrant officers, your share will not be less than £1,500, perhaps more. As you said, the salvage of the Indiaman has proved more valuable to us than all the rest of our prize-money put together."

"Well, Captain Keene, if my prize-money comes to as much as that, I think I shall be nearly as well off as my little Jane will be. Will you have the kindness to let your agent put it by for me in the same way that you have done yours?"

"Yes, Cross, I will see to it immediately ;

I shall write to him to-morrow, or the day after."

After a little conversation, Cross took leave. The next day I took post-horses, and went over to Madeline Hall, having two or three days before received a note from the Honourable Miss Delmar, saying how glad she should be to see me as a friend and shipmate of her nephew, Lord de Versely, so that it appeared that the old lady had been written to by Lord de Versely respecting me.

I arrived early in the afternoon, and the post-chaise drove up the avenue of magnificent chestnut-trees which led to the mansion.

CHAPTER XII.

I MUST say, that I was very much excited ; I was now arriving at the site of my birth, and it brought to my mind the details given me by my poor mother, when, finding she could no longer conceal the truth from me, she entered into a narrative to extenuate her conduct, pointing out her temptations, and how fatal to her were opportunity and seclusion. Her form was before me with the tears running down her cheeks as she made her humiliating confession to her own son, and I could not help exclaiming as I cast my eye upon the beautiful grounds, “ My poor mother ! ”

The chaise stopped, and the boys dismounted

and rang the bell. In a minute, three or four servants made their appearance, and on inquiring, I found that the Honourable Miss Delmar was at home, and visible.

“Colonel Delmar, I presume, Sir?” said the old butler.

“No,” replied I—“Captain Keene.”

The butler looked me full in the face, and earnestly; and then, as if recollecting himself, he bowed and went on.

“Captain Keene, Madam,” said he, as he introduced me into a large room, at the end of which sat a venerable-looking old lady very busy with her knitting needle, and another, almost equally ancient, sitting on a low stool beside her.

As I advanced, the old lady made me a bow as she remained in her chair, and looked at me through her spectacles. She certainly was the beau-ideal of old age. Her hair, which was like silver, was parted in braid, and was to be seen just peeping from under her cap

and pinner; she was dressed in black silk, with a snow-white apron and handkerchief, and there was an air of dignity and refinement about her which made you feel reverence for her at first sight. As I approached to take the chair offered to me, the other person, who appeared to be a sort of attendant, was shuffling her feet to rise, but as soon as Mrs. Delmar had said, "You are welcome, Captain Keene;" "Sit still," she continued, "my child, there is no occasion to go away." I could scarcely help smiling at the old lady calling a woman of past sixty, if not even further advanced, a child; but the fact was, that Phillis had been her attendant as lady's maid for many years, and subsequently promoted to the position of humble companion.

As for Miss Delmar, as I afterwards found out from her own lips, she was upwards of eighty-seven years old, but still in perfect good health and in full possession of all her faculties; Phillis therefore was much younger, and as the old lady had had her in her employ ever since

she was twenty-two, it was not surprising that she continued to address her, as she had done for so many years, as a young person compared to herself; indeed, I have no doubt but that the old lady, following up her association of former days, and forgetting the half-century that had intervened, did consider her as a mere child. The old lady was very chatty and very polite, and as our conversation naturally turned on Lord de Versely, of whom I spoke in terms of admiration and gratitude, I had soon established myself in her good graces. Indeed, as I subsequently discovered, her nephew was the great object of her affections. His younger brother had neglected her, and was never mentioned except when she regretted that Lord de Versely had no children, and that the title would descend to his brother.

She requested me to stay dinner, which I did not refuse, and before dinner was over I had made great progress in the old lady's esteem. As, when dinner was announced, her companion

disappeared, we were then alone. She asked me many questions relative to Lord de Versely, and what had occurred during the time that I was serving with him; and this was a subject on which I could be eloquent. I narrated several of our adventures, particularly the action with the Dutch frigate, and other particulars in which I could honestly do credit to his lordship, and I often referred to his kindness for me.

“Well, Captain Keene, my nephew has often spoken to me about you, and now you have done him credit in proving that he had made you a good officer; and I have heard how much you have distinguished yourself since you have left him.”

“Or rather he left me, Madam,” replied I, “when he was summoned to the House of Peers.”

“Very true,” replied the old lady. “I suppose you know that you were born in this house, Captain Keene?”

“ I have been told so, Madam.”

“ Yes, I have no doubt your poor mother that's gone must have told you. I recollect her—a very clever, active, and pretty young woman (here the old lady sighed); and I held you in my arms, Captain Keene, when you were only a few days old.”

“ You did me great honour, Madam,” replied I.

Here the conversation took another channel, which I was not sorry for.

After tea, I rose to take my leave, and then I received an invitation from the old lady to come and spend some time at Madeline Hall, and to come a few days before the first of September, that I might join the shooting party. “ I expect my nephew, Lord de Versely,” said she, “ and there is Colonel Delmar of the Rifles, a cousin of Lord de Versely, also coming, and one or two others. Indeed, I expect the colonel every day. He is a very pleasant and gentlemanlike man.”

I accepted the invitation with pleasure, and then took my leave. The chaise drove off, and I was soon in a deep reverie; I called to mind all my mother had told me, and I longed to return to the Hall, and visit those scenes which had been referred to in my mother's narrative; and more than that, I wished to meet Lord de Versely on the spot which could not fail to call to his mind my mother, then young, fond, and confiding; how much she had sacrificed for him, how true she had proved to his interests, and how sacred the debt of obligation, which he could only repay by his conduct towards me.

On my return to Portsmouth, I found that orders had come down for the paying off the *Diligente*, and re-commissioning her immediately. As the men would now be free (until again caught by the impress, which would not be long), I turned up the ship's company, and asked how many of them would enter for the *Circe*. I pointed out to them that they would be impressed for other vessels before long, but

that I could give them each three months of absence, upon which they would not be molested, and that by three months all their money would be gone, and if it were gone before that time, the guard ship would receive them when they had had enough of the shore. By this method, I proposed to myself to obtain the foundation of a good ship's company. I was not disappointed. Every man I wished to take with me volunteered, and I wrote leave of absence tickets for three months for them all as belonging to the *Circe*, reporting what I had done to the Admiralty. The brig was then paid off, and the next day re-commissioned by a Captain Rose, with whom I had some slight acquaintance.

As I was now my own master again,—for although appointed to the *Circe* I had nothing but my pennant to look at,—I thought that, by way of a little change, I would pass a few days at the Isle of Wight, for this was the yachting season, and I had made the acquaintance of many of the gentlemen who belonged to the

club. That I had no difficulty in getting into society may easily be imagined. A post-captain's commission in his Majesty's navy is a certain passport with all liberal and really aristocratical people; and, as it is well known that a person who has not had the advantage of interest and family connections to advance in the service, must have gained his promotion by his own merits, his rank is sufficient to establish his claims to family connections or personal merit, either of which is almost universally acknowledged; I say almost universally, because, strange to say, for a succession of reigns, the navy never has been popular at Court. In that region, where merit of any kind is seldom permitted to intrude, the navy have generally been at a discount. Each succession of the House of Hanover has been hailed by its members with fresh hopes of a change in their favour, which hopes have ended in disappointment; but perhaps it is as well. The navy require no prophet to tell it, in the literal

sense of the word, that one cannot touch pitch without being defiled; but there is a moral pitch, the meanness, the dishonesty, and servility of Court, with which, I trust, our noble service will never be contaminated.

I have, however, somewhat wandered from my subject, which was brought up in consequence of a gentleman who had paid me every attention at a large club down at Cowes, to which I had been invited, inquiring of me across the table, if I were connected with the Keenes of —? My reply was ready: “I did not think that I was; my father had died a young man in the East Indies. I knew that he was of Scotch descent (which he was), but I was too young to know any thing about his connections, whom he had quitted at an early age; since that I had been educated and brought forward by Lord de Versely, who had, since the death of my mother, treated me as if I were his own son.” This was said openly, and being strictly true, of course without hesi-

tation on my part. It was quite sufficient ; I had noble patronage, and it was therefore to be presumed that I was somebody, or that patronage would not have been extended. I mention this, because it was the only time that I was ever questioned about my family ; it was therefore to be presumed that my reply was considered satisfactory.

I accepted an invitation on board of the yacht, and sailed about for several days, very much amused and flattered by the attention shewn to me by the noble commodore and others. One day I fell in with an old acquaintance. A small vessel, of about twenty tons, cutter-rigged, came down under the stern of the commodore's yacht ; it was then very smooth water, very light wind, and, moreover, very hot weather ; and one of the squadron, who was standing by me on the taffrail, said, " Keene, do look at this craft coming down under our stern—there's quite a curiosity in it. It is a yacht belonging to an Irish Major O'Flinn, as

he calls himself; why the O, I don't know; but he's a good fellow, and very amusing; there he is abaft; he has the largest whiskers you ever saw; but it is not of him I would speak. Wait a little, and as soon as the square sail is out of the way, you will see his wife. Such a whapper! I believe she weighs more than the rhinoceros did which was at Post-down fair."

As the vessel neared, I did behold a most enormous woman in a sky-blue silk dress, and a large sky-blue parasol over her head; the bonnet having been taken off, I presume on account of the heat. "She is a monster," replied I; "the major was a bold man; I think I have seen the face before."

"I am told that she was the daughter of a purser, and had a lot of money," continued my friend.

I recollected then, and I replied, "Yes; I know now, her name was Culpepper."

"That was the name," replied he; "I recollect now."

The reader may probably recollect Miss Medea, who knew so well how to put that and that together ; and her mother, who I presumed had long ago been suffocated in her own fat, a fate which I thought that Mrs. O'Flinn would meet with as well as her mother. The lady did not recognize me, which I was not sorry for. I certainly should have cut her dead. I walked forward, and my thoughts reverted to the time when my mother first brought me down to embark, and I was taken care of by Bob Cross. This recollection of Bob Cross reminded me that I had promised to be at his wedding, and that it was to take place on the following day, which I had quite forgotten. So that Mrs. O'Flinn did me a good turn at last, as I should have neglected my promise, if she had not made her appearance, sailing along like an elephantine Cleopatra.

CHAPTER XIII.

I HAD not called upon old Waghorn, the uncle of Jane, as I was fearful that he might recognize the pretended agent of former days, with the now captain of the *Circe*. The blind are very acute in all their other senses, a species of reparation made by nature by way of indemnification for the severe loss which they have sustained.

As I grew older, I grew wiser, and I could not help remarking, that the acts of deceit which as a midshipman I thought not only very justifiable, but good fun, were invariably attended with unpleasant results. Even in this trifle my heart misgave me, whether on my appearance at

the wedding I might not be recognized, and be the cause of creating a breach, by raising suspicions on the part of the blind man, which might prevent the wedding; and I had stated my fears to Bob Cross. "Well, Captain Keene, it was all done with good intentions, and I do not think that there is much fear. It's a long while back, and you were not so much of a man as you are now. They do say, that cheating never thrives, and I believe that it seldom does in the long run. Jane will be very much disappointed if you do not come."

"There is no help for it, Bob; I must disguise my voice; I must cheat a little now to hide the first cheat. That's always the case in this world."

"I don't call it cheating, Sir; my ideas are, that if you cheat to get an advantage for yourself, then you do cheat; but when you do so to help another, there's no great cheating in the case."

"I cannot agree with you, Bob; but let us

say no more about it. I will be with you at ten o'clock, which you say is the hour that you go to church."

This conversation took place on the morning of the wedding. About eight o'clock, I dressed and breakfasted, and then took a wherry over to Gosport, and in half an hour was at the house, which was full of people with white favours, and in such a bustle, that it reminded me of a hive of bees just previous to a swarm.

"Here's the captain come, Sir," said Bob, who had received me, for the bride was still in her room with her mother.

"Happy to see you, Sir ; I wish you joy, Mr. Waghorn," replied I, taking his hand.

"You're Captain Keene, then, whose letters to the Admiralty Jane has so often read to me in the newspapers. Where have we met? I've heard that voice before."

"Indeed, Sir," replied I, rather confused.

"Yes, I have ; I always know a voice again ; let me see—why, Captain, you were here with

Cross, the first time I ever heard him ; you were an agent, and now you're a captain," continued the old man, looking very grave.

"Hush, Sir," replied I ; "pray don't speak so loud. Do you recollect what I came about ? Do you suppose that when I was a party to the escape of a prisoner, I could let you know, being a perfect stranger, that I was an officer in his Majesty's service ?"

"Very true," replied the old man, "I cannot blame you for that. But was Cross an officer in the service at that time ?"

"No, Sir, he was not," replied I ; "he was appointed boatswain to my ship by the admiral in the West Indies."

"I'm glad to hear that, I thought Cross might have deceived me also ; every one tries to cheat a blind man—and the blind are suspicious. I'm glad that Cross did not deceive me, or I would have seen my niece in her coffin before—but say no more about it, you could not do otherwise ; all's right, Sir, and I'm very

glad to see you, and to have the honour of your company. Sit down, Sir, I beg. By the bye, Captain Keene, have you heard of the girl since?"

"My dear Sir," replied I, glad to give him my confidence, "there are no secrets between us now; it was no girl, but the son of the captain of the Dutch frigate, and an officer, whose escape you assisted in."

"I don't wonder, then, at your not making yourself known," replied the old man. "Why, if I had known it had been an officer, I never would have had a hand in the job; but a poor girl, it was mere charity to assist her, and I thought I was acting the part of a Christian, poor blind sinner that I am."

"You did a kind act, Sir, and Heaven will reward you."

"We are sad wicked creatures, Captain Keene," replied he. "I wish this day was over, and my poor Jane made happy; and then I should have nothing to do but to read my

Bible and prepare for being called away ; it's never too soon, depend upon it, Sir."

The appearance of the bride with her bridesmaids put an end to our conversation, which I was not sorry for. The order of march was arranged, and we started off for the church on foot, making a very long and very gay procession. In half an hour it was all over, and we returned. I then had an opportunity of telling Cross what had passed between me and old Waghorn.

"It was touch and go, Sir, that's sartin," replied Bob ; "for if the old gentleman had not been satisfied, he is so obstinate, that the match would have been broken off at the church door. Well, Sir, I always said that you were the best to get out of a scrape that I ever knew when you were a middy, and you don't appear to have lost the talent ; it was well managed."

"Perhaps so, Bob ; but in future I do not intend to get into them, which will be managing

better still. I then left Cross, and went to talk to Jane, who certainly looked very handsome. The tables for dinner were laid out in the garden, for it was a beautiful warm autumnal day. We sat down about twenty, and a merrier party I never was at. Old Waghorn was the only one who got tipsy on the occasion, and it was very ridiculous to hear him quoting scraps of Scripture in extenuation, and then calling himself a poor blind old sinner. It was not till eight o'clock in the evening that the party broke up, and I had then some difficulty to persuade some to go away. As for the old man, he had been put to bed an hour before. I staid a few minutes after all were gone, and then kissing Jane, and shaking hands with Bob, I went back to Portsmouth.

CHAPTER XIV.

As soon as I was at home again, the events of the day, from association of ideas, naturally brought Minnie Vanderwelt into my head, and I recollected that I had not written to her since my promotion and appointment to the Circe ; I therefore sat down and indited a long letter, ending with expressing my regret at not having received an answer from the many I had written, especially the last, which informed them of my arrival in England, and gave them the knowledge where to address me. I also requested to know what had become of young Vangilt, whose escape I had contrived. Having enclosed that letter to the agent, and begged

him to have it forwarded to Hamburg, I went to bed, and, after the excitement of the day, had a variety of dreams, in which Minnie's form was continually making its appearance.

The following morning brought me a long letter from my aunt, Mrs. Bridgeman, very lively and very amusing: the only news in it was the marriage of Lieutenant Flat to a tavern-keeper's daughter, which had given great offence to the marine corps, as she was said to be rather light of carriage. She begged me very much to pay them a visit, but that was not at all to my wishes, I most candidly confess. My pride revolted at it; I even doubt if I would have fitted out a ship at Chatham where people could point their finger at me, and say—That post-captain's father was a marine in those barracks. Another letter from Lord de Versey, announcing his arrival at Madeline Hall, and requesting me to join him as soon as possible, was infinitely more to my taste, and I resolved to start next day, which I did. I was

very cordially received by his lordship, and very graciously by the old lady, who expressed a hope that I would now make a long visit. About an hour after I had arrived, Colonel Delmar made his appearance : he was a cousin of Lord de Versely's, but I certainly should not, from his appearance, have supposed him to be a Delmar : for he was short, round-shouldered, and with a fat rubicund face, apparently about forty years of age. I observed, after our introduction, that his eyes were very often directed towards me, but his manner was courteous, and, although his appearance at first sight was not prepossessing, his conversation was very agreeable, and he was very gentleman-like. Before dinner was over, I felt a great liking for him.

As the first of September had not yet arrived, the birds had still two days of peace and quietness, leading their broods through the stubbles, and pointing out to them the corn which had spilled on the ground for their food. That the old birds had some idea of a gun, it is

to be supposed, from their having escaped the season before ; but the young coveys had still that pleasure to come ; in two days more they were to be initiated into the astonishing fact, that fast as feathers could fly, lead could fly faster, and overtake them.

The two or three days before the shooting season begins are invariably very tedious in the country, and I passed my morning chiefly in roving about through the park and pleasure grounds, and I hardly need say, that during those rambles, my thoughts were chiefly occupied with the intimacy which had taken place between my mother and Lord de Versely. On the third morning after my arrival, I had been strolling for more than two hours, when I came to a very retired sort of Gothic cell, formed of the distended limbs of an old oak, intermixed with stones and grass. It faced towards the park, and was built up on the green lawn, amidst clumps of laurel and other evergreens. I threw myself on the benches. It was just the

place for a man to select for a rendezvous; just the secret spot where a maiden could listen without trembling at intruders; and it struck me that this must have been the trysting place of my parents. For an hour I remained there, castle-building for the future and musing on the past, when I heard a voice, close to me on the other side of the cell, the back of which was turned towards the hall. I knew the voice to be that of the old lady, who, it appears, had, as usual, come out in her garden chair, and was dragged by her attendant, Phillis; the wheels had made no noise on the velvet lawn, and, until roused by her voice, I was not aware of their approach.

“Nonsense, Phillis; why, child, what should you know about such things?” said the old lady.

“If you please to recollect, Ma’am,” replied Phillis, who certainly was old enough to recollect all the passages in a woman’s life, “I was your maid at the time that it happened,

and I was constantly in company with Bella Mason. She was very respectful towards you, but you did not know what her temper was; there never was so proud a young woman, or who considered herself of such consequence as she did—so much so, that she treated even Mr. Jonas, the butler, and Mrs. Short, the housekeeper, with disdain.”

“ Well, well, I know that she was proud; her mother was always a proud woman. Mr. Mason, in his younger days, held property of his own, at least his father did, but he ran through it revelling and horseracing; but what does that prove?”

“ I only say, Madam, what was said at the time by everybody, that Bella Mason never would have married that marine whom she looked upon with contempt, although he certainly was a good-looking young man, if she had not been obliged to do so.”

“ But why obliged, Phillis?”

“ To conceal her shame, Madam; for if you

recollect, the child was born three months after marriage."

"I recollect that very well," replied Miss Delmar; "it was a sad thing, and, as my nephew said, I ought to have looked out sharper after Bella than I did, and not have allowed her to be so much in company with that marine."

"That marine, Ma'am! he was innocent enough; Bella was not likely to listen to one like him."

"Who can you mean then, Phillis?"

"Why, Lord de Versely, Ma'am, to be sure. Everybody in the Hall was sure the child was his; he and Bella were for ever together for months before her marriage."

"Phillis, Phillis, you don't know what you are saying; it's impossible; indeed, I recollect talking the matter over with Lord de Versely, who was then Captain Delmar, and he was more shocked at the impropriety than even I was, and offered to give the marine a good whipping."

“That may be, Madam, but still Captain Delmar was the father of that boy; for, if you recollect, old Mrs. Mason came to the Hall, and went away almost immediately.”

“Well, what of that? she was displeased, no doubt.”

“Yes, indeed she was, Madam; but she had a private meeting with Captain Delmar, and Mrs. Short, the housekeeper, overheard what passed, and I understand that the captain did not deny it to her. One thing is certain, that Mrs. Mason, as she was going away, in her rage made use of language about Captain Delmar, which otherwise she never would have dared. And then, Madam, only look at Captain Keene,—why he is the very image of his lordship.”

“He is very like him, certainly,” said the old lady, musing.

“And then, Madam, do you think his lordship would have brought the boy up in the service and made him a post-captain, if he had been

the son of a marine? And then, Madam, see how fond his lordship is of him; why he dotes upon him, and would he ask the son of his own servant to come down to Madeline Hall, as fit company for you? No; so, Madam, depend upon it, Captain Keene is a Delmar, and no wonder his lordship is so fond of him, Madam; for he is his only child, and I dare say his lordship would give him his right hand if he could leave him the barony and estates, instead of them going away, as they will, to his younger brother's children."

"Well, well, Phillis, it may be so. I don't know what to think of it. I shall speak to Lord de Versely about it, for if Captain Keene is a Delmar, he must be looked to. He is a Delmar, although with the bar sinister. I feel a little cold, Phillis, so drag me to the terrace, that I may get a little sunshine."

Phillis, I thank thee, said I to myself, as the chair wheeled away. Your love of chatting may be useful to me. Perhaps his lordship

may now acknowledge my birth to his aunt, and good may come of it. I waited till the chair wheels were heard on the gravel walk, and then quitted the grotto, and bent my steps away from the Hall, that I might commune with my own thoughts without chance of interruption.

I had quitted the park, and was now pacing over several fields, one after another, walking as if I had some important business in hand, when, in fact, my legs were only trying to keep pace with my thoughts, when I vaulted over a gate, and found myself in a narrow lane, sunk deep between the two hedges. Indifferent as to the path I took, I turned to the right, and continued on my way, walking as fast as before, when I heard the low bellowing of an animal. This induced me to raise my eyes, and I witnessed a curious scene in front of me, which I will narrate in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

As I said before, the lane was very narrow, not admitting more than one vehicle to go along it, and was sunk between the hedges on each side, so as to render it not very easy to climb up the bank. The parties who presented themselves, were, first a cow with her tail turned towards me, evidently a wicked one, as she was pawing and bellowing in a low tone, and advancing towards two people who were the object of her attack. One was a very little man, dressed in black, the other a stout burley young fellow in a shooting-jacket; but what amused me most was, that the stout young fellow, instead of being in the advance to defend one so

much smaller than himself, not only kept behind the little man, but actually now and then held him by the shoulders before his own person, as a shield to ward off the expected attack of the vicious animal. It is true that the little personage expostulated, and spoke several times in a tone of command to his companion, but his words were unheeded, and the cow advanced, and they retreated in the order which I have described.

I quickened my pace, so as to gain rapidly upon them, and was soon but a few yards from the animal. I had no stick or weapon of any kind, but still I knew how to manage unruly cattle as sailors do when they were sent on board ship alive. Indeed, I had more than once put it into practice myself; and although with a bull it was not a very easy matter, with a cow I felt certain that I could effect my purpose.

The animal appeared now determined to come to close quarters; and I therefore approached her until I was about a couple of feet

from her flank, all ready for a spring, in case she should see me, and turn round. But she was too busy with the parties in front of her, and at last she made a run. The stout young man pushed the little man towards the cow, and then ran for it. The little one, in his attempt to recoil, fell on the turf, and the cow made at him. I sprang forward, and catching the horn of the animal farthest from me in my right hand, at the same time put my left knee on the horn nearest to me, threw all my weight upon it, so as to turn the animal's nose up in the air, and seizing it by the nostrils with the other hand, I held her head in that position, which of course, rendered the animal harmless. In that position the cow went over the prostrate man without doing him any injury, plunging and capering, so as to extricate herself from my weight. I remained clinging to her for about ten yards further, when I perceived the stout fellow ahead, who hallooed out, "Hold her tight! hold her tight!" but that I would no longer do, as it

was fatiguing work ; so, as a punishment for his cowardice, I let go the animal, springing clear off, and behind it, the cow galloping away as fast as she could down the lane, and the fellow screaming and running before as fast as he could.

Having thus rid myself of the cow and the coward, I turned back to where the other party had been left on the ground, and found him standing up, and looking at what was passing. “ You’re not hurt, Sir ? ” said I.

“ No, thanks to you ; but no thanks to that rascally clerk of mine, who wanted to shove me on the cow’s horns, to save himself.”

“ He has a run for it now, at all events,” replied I, laughing, “ and I let the cow loose on purpose ; for if I had held on, and used all my strength, I could have brought her down on her side, and kept her down. Oh ! there’s a break in the bank, and he has climbed up it, so he is safe for a good fright,” continued I ; “ and now we had better get away our-

selves; for the animal may come back, and, although one can pin her in that way from behind, it is not to be done when she comes stem on to you."

"Well, Sir, I have heard of taking the bull by the horns as not being a very wise thing; but taking a cow by them has probably saved my life. I thank you."

"We manage them that way on board ship," replied I, laughing.

"You are a sailor, then, Sir," replied the little man. "Probably, I have the pleasure of addressing Captain Keene?"

"That is my name," replied I; "but here is the cow coming back, and the sooner we get to the gate, the better. I'm not ashamed to run for it, and I suppose you are not either. So saying, I took to my heels, followed by my new companion, and we very soon put the barred gate between us and our enemy.

"I will wish you good day now, Sir," said I, "I am going to the Hall."

“I am also bound there, Captain Keene,” replied my companion, “and, with your permission, will accompany you. Egad, we may meet another cow,” said he, laughing, “and I prefer being in your company.”

He then informed me, that he was the solicitor and agent of the Honourable Miss Delmar, and had been sent for about some new leases, and that his name was Warden. During our walk, I found him a very cheerful, merry little man, and a very good companion.

On our arrival at the Hall, Mr. Warden was informed that Miss Delmar was not able to receive him just then, as she was very busy with Lord de Versely, who was with her in her private room. I therefore remained with Mr. Warden for about an hour, when Lord de Versely came down and joined us. He appeared to be in a remarkable gay humour, and shook me warmly by the hand when he came in.

“Now, Mr. Warden, you are to go up and

receive your instructions, and, recollect, the sooner every thing is executed the better."

Mr. Warden left the room, and I narrated to his lordship the adventure with the cow. Just as I had begun it, Colonel Delmar came in, and listened to my narration.

In about half an hour, Mr. Warden came down-stairs, and with a very smiling face.

"Well, Mr. Warden," said his lordship, "have you your instructions?"

"Yes, my Lord, and I assure you that I never shall execute any with so much pleasure. Has Captain Keene told you how he saved my life this morning?"

"No, he did not say that," replied his lordship, "but he has told me about the cow, and your clerk putting you foremost in the breach."

"She would have made a breach in me, I expect, if it had not been for the captain," replied Mr. Warden, "and you may therefore believe me, my Lord, when I say that I shall obey my instructions with pleasure. I wish

you good morning. Good morning, Captain Keene. Colonel, your most obedient." So saying, Mr. Warden left the room. I was very much struck with Mr. Warden's observation, that he would execute his instructions with so much pleasure; and when I turned round, I perceived that Colonel Delmar was looking very grave, but the first dinner bell rang, and we all went to our rooms to dress. Well, thought I, as I was dressing myself, I presume the old lady has left me a thousand or two in her will. I cared little about that, and then I dismissed the subject from my thoughts; but as I sat by Miss Delmar after dinner, I could not help thinking that her manner towards me was more affectionate than it had been before; the hauteur with which her civility and kindness had hitherto been blended, appeared to have been thrown aside; I presumed that Lord de Versely had been speaking in my favour, and felt grateful to him for his kindness. Perhaps, thought I, he has revealed to her the secret of

my birth, and she now considers me as a relation ; perhaps she may have left me more than I supposed. However, it is of little consequence.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE next day being the first of September, we were all very busy, and we continued to shoot every day for a week, when I thought it time to return to Portsmouth. I mentioned my intentions to Lord de Versely, and was pressed to stay until the following Saturday, it being then Tuesday. On Wednesday, Mr. Warden made his appearance, attended by his clerk, who carried a bag of papers. He remained half an hour, and then went home; but before he went, he asked me to dine with him on the following day, and I consented.

After we returned from shooting, the next day, I changed my clothes, and, leaving word

with the butler that I dined out, I took my way across the fields. I was walking very quietly on the grass, by the side of a high hedge, when I perceived two other men on the opposite side ; one I recognized as Colonel Delmar, the other I could not at first make out ; but, as I approached them, I perceived that the colonel was talking with the clerk of Mr. Warden. I passed them without notice, for they were very earnestly engaged in conversation. What they said I did not know, but I thought it singular that so proud a person as Colonel Delmar should be so engaged with an inferior ; a little reflection, however, made me consider that there was nothing very surprising in Colonel Delmar's entering into conversation with a man in the country. They might be talking about the game, or a hundred other things.

I had a very friendly dinner with Mr. Warden, who, after dinner, gave me a hint that I should not be the worse for the papers signed

the day before. He did not, however, say any thing positive, as it would have been a breach of trust. When I spoke of my soon being afloat again, he said that he would not fail to watch over my interests at the Hall during my absence, and he requested that I would write to him, and consider him as my sincere friend. "Of course, my dear Captain Keene, I do not expect that you will at present give me your entire confidence, but I trust you will when you know me, and at all events that you will not fail to do so when my advice may be of use to you. I have a debt of obligation to pay, and I shall be most happy to do so, if it is in my power!" I thanked Mr. Warden for his kind offers, and promised to avail myself of them, and we parted great friends.

The next day, Friday, we had a large addition to our shooting party. I had not been out more than an hour, when, as I was standing near Lord de Versely, who was re-loading his gun, a report, close to us, was heard, and I fell

down close to his feet, apparently dead. A keeper, who was with us, ran to see who had discharged the gun, and found that it was Colonel Delmar, who now ran up to us, stating, in hurried terms, to Lord de Versely, that his gun had gone off accidentally as he was putting on a copper cap, and bitterly lamenting the circumstance. Lord de Versely was at the time kneeling down by my side (as I was afterwards informed), shewing the greatest anxiety and grief. My hat had been taken off: it was full of blood, and the back of my head was much torn with the shot. I remained insensible, although breathing heavily; a gate was taken off its hinges, and I was laid upon it, and carried to the Hall.

Before the surgeon had arrived, I had recovered my senses. On examination, I had had a very narrow escape; the better part of the charge of shot had entered the back part of my head, but fortunately not any had penetrated through the skull. After a tedious hour, employed in extracting this load, my head

was bound up, and I was made comfortable in my bed. I must say that Lord de Versely and Colonel Delmar vied with each other in their attentions to me; the latter constantly accusing himself as the author of the mischief, and watching by my bed the major part of the day.

This accident delayed my departure, and it was not until three weeks afterwards, that I was sufficiently recovered to leave my room. In the meantime, Lord de Versely, assured that I was out of danger, went back to London. The colonel, however, remained. His kindness and attention had given me great pleasure, and we had become very intimate. He had offered to go with me to Portsmouth, and I had expressed the pleasure I should have in his company. The Honourable Miss Delmar had shewn the greatest feeling and anxiety for me during my illness, so had Mr. Warden, who often called to see me; in fact, I found myself so surrounded by well-wishers

and friends, that I hardly regretted my accident.

At the end of the fifth week, I was sufficiently recovered to be able to return to Portsmouth, where I was now very anxious to arrive, as the *Circe* had been launched, and already received her lower masts. I took my leave of Miss Delmar, who requested my early return to Madeline Hall, and, accompanied by Colonel Delmar, was once more established at Billett's Hotel.

Bob Cross was the first who made his appearance, for I had written to him to acquaint him with my intended return. He had heard of my narrow escape, as it had been put into the newspaper; his information was trifling, but to the purpose. All was right as to the frigate: she sat on the water like a duck; the rigging was far advanced, and the officers seemed of the right sort. All was right, also, as to his matrimonial affairs; his wife was every thing he wished; the old gentleman was as sweet

as molasses; and he had laid the keel of a young Cross. We then entered upon business, and I gave him some directions as to the rigging, and he left me.

The next morning, the first lieutenant called to pay his respects, and his appearance and conversation proved him to be what he had been recommended, as a good seaman and a brave man. I went with him to the dock-yard to look at the frigate in the basin, and afterwards on board the hulk to see the other officers and the men, who had been entered. I had every reason to be satisfied, and I then returned to the hotel, to dine with Colonel Delmar. This officer appeared to have taken a very strong interest in me, and ever since the accident of his gun going off, which had so nearly been fatal to me, was unbounded in his professions of regard. I must say, that a more gentleman-like or more amusing companion I never met with. A great intimacy was established between us; he was constantly making me pre-

sents of value, which I would fain have prevented his doing ; occasionally, when we were alone, he would hint something about my family and parentage ; but this was a subject upon which I was invariably silent, and I immediately changed the conversation ; once only I replied, that my father and mother were both dead.

On my arrival at Portsmouth, I found several letters waiting for me, and among them two or three from my mother, who had seen the report in the newspaper of the escape that I had had, and, of course, was excessively anxious to hear from my own hand how I was. Had I thought that it would have come to her knowledge, I certainly should have written to my grandmother from Madeline Hall, but I imagined that she knew nothing about it until my return to Portsmouth, when her anxious letters proved the contrary ; for in her anxiety, she had quite forgotten her promise that all communication should be through my grandmother.

As soon as I had read the letters I locked them up in my desk, and hastened to reply to them, assuring my mother of my perfect restoration to health, and cautioned her not to break through the agreement we had made for the future, pointing out to her that had these letters been forwarded to Madeline Hall, her handwriting would have been recognized. I said in conclusion, "I must say, my dear mother, that I now heartily repent that we should have resorted to the step we have done in pretending that you are dead. That some advantage was gained by it at the time, I really believe, but I have a feeling that eventually some mischief may occur from it. I hope I may be mistaken, but if I am not, it will only be the punishment which I deserve for an act of duplicity which I have repented of ever since."

CHAPTER XVII.

My time was now fully employed during the day in fitting out the frigate, but in the evening I generally dined out at the admiral or the officers' mess. I received several invitations from the marine mess to dine with them, but I always contrived to be engaged, for I was fearful that something might be said relative to my putative father Ben, which might hurt my pride. Not that I had any reason to suppose that any of the officers would have been guilty of any such rudeness, but as a great deal of wine was drank when company were at the mess, and there were many young men there, it was possible that, having the knowledge, they might

in their cups say something which they never would have done when they were sober. The colonel very often dined there, and constantly asked me why I refused. My reply was certainly not the truth, for I said that I was not very partial to marine officers.

We had been three weeks at Portsmouth, when Colonel Delmar received a letter from a friend of his, a Major Stapleton, which he read aloud to me at breakfast. It stated that the major would be down at Portsmouth the next day, and requested the colonel to procure him good rooms. "He is an excellent fellow, the major," continued the colonel, "and will be a great addition to our society. I will prevail upon him to stay a week or ten days."

On my return from the dock-yard on the following day, I found the colonel and Major Stapleton in our sitting-room, and was introduced to him. He was a small, neatly-made man, with handsome features, very well dressed, and of very fashionable appearance. Still there

was something in his eye which did not please me; it was unsettled and wandering, and never fixed upon you for more than a second. He met me with great warmth and *empressement*, shook me by the hand, and declared what pleasure he had in making my acquaintance. We sat down to dinner, and were very merry.

The major had been with us a week, when we had a large party to dinner. The wine was passed freely, and we all were more or less elated. The major appeared particularly so, and very much inclined to be quarrelsome, and as he constantly addressed himself to me, I was very cautious in what I said, as I perceived that he was in the humour to take offence at any thing; several very offensive remarks were made by him, as if to pick a quarrel between us, but I parried them as well as I could, and I was making an observation, when the major started up, and told me that what I said was a lie, and that I was a scoundrel for having said so.

Now, as my observation was to my first

lieutenant, and was in reference to the hold of the frigate, there could be no cause for this insult, and it could only be ascribed to his being in a state of intoxication. My reply was very cool and quiet: "Major, you do not know what you are saying, but we will talk about it to-morrow morning." I then rose, and went to my bed-room, and the whole party broke up immediately.

Shortly afterwards, Colonel Delmar came into my room, and blaming the major very much for his conduct, ascribed it to intoxication, and said that he would make him send a proper apology, which he had no doubt the next morning, when the major was informed of what he had done, he would be most anxious to offer himself.

I replied, that I presumed so; and he quitted my room. Indeed, so fully was I convinced of this in my own mind, that I gave it no further thought, and was soon fast asleep, and did not wake until Colonel Delmar entered my room at a late hour.

“ Well, Colonel,” said I.

“ My dear Keene,” said he, “ I have been to the major, and, to my surprise, when I stated to him what had passed at the table last night, his reply was, that he perfectly remembered all about it, and that he would not retract what he had said. I remonstrated with him, but in vain. He says, that it is cowardly to retract, and that he will never make an apology.

“ Then,” replied I, “ there is but one step for me to take.”

“ As your friend, I told him so, and pressed him very hard to acknowledge his error, but he continued steadfast in his refusal. I then took upon myself to say that I was there as your friend, and begged he would name an officer to whom I might address myself. Did I not right, my dear Keene ?”

“ Certainly, and I am very much obliged to you,” replied I, putting on my dressing-gown.

“ He must be mad, utterly and positively

mad!" exclaimed Colonel Delmar; "I regret very much that he has ever come here. I know that some years ago, when he was younger, he fought two or three duels rather than make an apology, but in this instance it was so unprovoked, and I had hoped that he had got over all that nonsense and obstinacy. Are you a good shot, Keene? because he is a notorious one."

"I can hit my man, Colonel; it is true that I have only fought one duel in my life, and would make a great sacrifice rather than fight another; but no alternative is left me in this case, and if blood is shed, it must be on the head of him who provoked it."

"Very true," replied Colonel Delmar, biting his lip, "I only hope you will be successful."

"I have no particular animosity against Major Stapleton," replied I, "but as he is such a good shot, I shall in my own defence take good aim at him. At all events, I have sufficient acquaintance with fire-arms, and have

passed through too many bullets not to be cool and collected under fire, and I therefore consider myself quite a match for the major. Now, Colonel, if you will order the breakfast, I will be down in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour."

As the colonel was going out of the room, his servant knocked at the door, and said that Captain Green wished to speak to him on particular business; I therefore did not hurry myself, but proceeded quietly with my toilet, as I was well aware what the particular business was, and that the conference might last some time. On my descending into the sitting-room, I found the colonel alone.

"Well, Keene," said he, "every thing is arranged, for the major is deaf to all expostulation. You are to meet this evening, and, to avoid interference, Captain Green and I have agreed to say that the major has apologized and all is made up. Of course, I had no objection to make to that, and we parted for the

present, I walking to the dock-yard, and he remaining at the hotel to write letters.

The reader may think that I took matters very coolly, but the fact was, I had no preparations to make in case of accident, having no wife or family, and as to any other preparations at such time, I considered them as mockery. I knew that I was about to do what was wrong—to offend my Creator—and knowing that, and sinning with my eyes open, much as I regretted that I was compelled to do so, I was still resolved upon doing it. How great may be the culpability in such cases when you are called upon to sacrifice all your worldly interests, and to be despised among men, or run the risk of involuntarily taking another person's life, I could not pretend to judge; but one thing was certain, that, however it may be judged in the next world, in this, among soldiers and sailors, it will always be considered as venial. I did, therefore, what most in my profession would have done under the same circumstances,

I drove it from my thoughts as much as possible, until the time came to decide my fate. I considered that I must be judged by the tenour of my whole life, and that repentance, under chance of death, was of about the same value as death-bed repentance.

As soon as the dock-yard men were mustered out, I returned to the hotel, and sat down to dinner with the colonel. We had scarcely finished a bottle of claret when it was time to be off. We walked out of the town, to the place appointed, where I found my adversary and his second. The ground was marked out by the colonel, and, when I took my station, I found that the setting sun was in my eyes. I pointed it out to him, and requested my position might be changed. The other second heard me do so, and very handsomely agreed that I was entitled to what I asked, and the colonel immediately apologized for his remissness to my interests. The ground was then marked out in another direction, and the colonel took me to

my place, where I observed that one of the white-washed posts was exactly behind me, making me a sure mark for my antagonist. "I am not used to these things, Keene," replied Colonel Delmar, "and I make strange mistakes." I then pointed out a direction which would be fair for both parties. The pistols were then loaded, and put into our hands. We fired at the signal. I felt that I was hit, but my adversary fell. I was paralyzed: and although I remained on my feet, I could not move. Captain Green and the colonel went up to where my adversary lay: the ball had passed through his chest.

"He is dead," said Captain Green—"quite dead."

"Yes," replied Colonel Delmar. "My dear Keene, I congratulate you: you have killed the greatest scoundrel that ever disgraced his Majesty's uniform."

"Colonel Delmar," replied Captain Green,

“the observation might well be spared : our errors and our follies die with us.”

“Very true, Captain Green,” replied I. “I can only express my surprise that the colonel should have introduced to me a person whose memory he now so bitterly assails.” Somehow or another, from the commencement of the duel, Colonel Delmar’s conduct had excited my suspicions, and a hundred things crowded into my memory, which appeared as if illumined like a flash of lightning. I came suddenly to the conviction that he was my enemy, and not my friend. But I was bleeding fast : some marines, who were passing, were summoned, and the body of Major Stapleton was carried away by one party, while I was committed to another, and taken back to the hotel. The surgeon was sent for, and my wound was not dangerous. The ball had gone deep into my thigh, but had missed any vessel of magnitude. It was soon extracted, and I was left quiet in bed. Colonel

Delmar came up to me as before, but I received his professions with great coolness. I told him that I thought it would be prudent of him to disappear until the affair had blown over, but he declared to me that he would remain with me at every risk. Shortly afterwards, Captain Green came into my room, and said, "I'm sure, Captain Keene, you will be glad to hear that Major Stapleton is not dead. He had swooned, and is now come to, and the doctor thinks favourably of him."

"I am indeed very glad, Captain Green, for I had no animosity against the major, and his conduct to me has been quite incomprehensible."

After inquiry about my wound, and expressing a hope that I should soon be well, Captain Green left, but I observed that he took no further notice of Colonel Delmar than a haughty salute as he quitted the room; and then, to my surprise, Colonel Delmar said that,

upon consideration, he thought it would be advisable for him to go away for a certain time.

“I agree with you,” replied I; “it would be better.” I said this, because I did not wish his company, for it at once struck me as very strange that he should, now that Major Stapleton was alive and promising to do well, talk of departure, when he had refused at the time that he supposed him to be killed. I was therefore very glad when in an hour or two afterwards he took his leave, and started, as he said, for London.

CHAPTER XVIII.

My recovery was rapid: in less than a fortnight I was on the sofa. The frigate was now rigged and had taken in her water and stores, and was reported ready for sea in a month, as we still required about forty men to make up our complement. I saw a great deal of Captain Green, who paid me a visit almost every day; and once, when our conversation turned upon the duel, I made the same remark as I did when Colonel Delmar used such harsh language over the body of Major Stapleton. "Yes," replied Captain Green, "I thought it my duty to tell him what Colonel Delmar had said. He was very much excited, and replied, 'The

greatest scoundrel, did he say?—then is the devil better than those he tempts; however, we are both in each other's power. I must get well first, and then I will act.' There certainly is some mystery, the attack was so unprovoked, the determination so positive. Have you any reason to suppose that Colonel Delmar is your enemy, Captain Keene? for certainly he did appear to me to do all he could at the time of the duel to give your adversary the advantage."

"I really have no cause to suppose that he has grounds for being my enemy, but I cannot help suspecting that, for some reason or reasons unknown, he is so."

When Captain Green had left me, I tried all I could to find out why Colonel Delmar should be inimical to me. That he was the supposed heir to Miss Delmar I knew, but surely her leaving me a few thousands was not sufficient cause for a man to seek my life. Lord de Versely had nothing to leave; I could come to no conclusion that was at all satisfactory. I

then thought whether I would write to Lord de Versely, and tell him what had happened, but I decided that I would not. The initials had been put in the papers at the announcement of the duel, and had he seen them, he certainly would have written down to inquire about the facts. My mother had so done, and I resolved that I would answer her letter, which had hitherto remained on the table. I sent for my desk, and when my servant brought it me, the bunch of keys were hanging to the lock. I thought this strange, as I had locked my desk before I went out to meet Major Stapleton, and had never sent for it since my return; my servant, however, could tell me nothing about it, except that he found it as he brought it to me; but after a little time, he recollected that the doctor had asked for a pen and ink to write a prescription, and that the colonel had taken the keys to get him what he required. This accounted for it, and nothing more was said upon the subject. Of course, although it was known,

no notice was taken of what had passed by the Admiralty. I had not even put myself down in the sick report, but signed my daily papers and sent them into the admiral's office as if nothing had happened.

In six weeks I was able to limp about a little, and the *Circe* was at last reported ready for sea. My orders came down, and I was to sail with the first fair wind to join the squadron in the Texel and North Sea. I had taken up my quarters on board, and was waiting two days, while the wind still blew hard from the eastward, when my promise to write to Mr. Warden occurred to me; and, as I had closed all my despatches to Lord de Versely—the Honourable Miss Delmar, to whom I made my excuse for not being able to pay my respects before my departure—my mother, and my aunt Bridgeman—I resolved that I would write him a long letter previous to my sailing. I did so, in which I entered into the whole affair of the duel, the conduct of Colonel Delmar, and my

suspicious relative to him ; stating, at the same time, that I could not comprehend why he should have sought to injure me. I finished this letter late in the evening, and the next morning, the wind having come round, we sailed for our destination.

Once more on the water, all my thoughts were given to the service. We soon fell in with the North Sea squadron, and the day afterwards the *Circe* was directed to go on shore in company with the *Dryad*, and watch the flotillas of gun-boats, which had been collecting in the various rivers and ports ; to sink, burn, and destroy to the utmost of our power. This was an active and dangerous service, as the enemy had every advantage in the sands and shoals, and hardly a day passed in which we were not engaged with the flotillas and batteries. It was, however, now fine weather, for the winter had set in early, and had passed away, and for two months we continued on the service, during which my ship's company

were well trained. One morning a cutter from the fleet was reported from the mast-head, and we expected that we should soon have our letters from England, when the *Dryad* threw out the signal for six sail of praams in shore.

The two frigates made all sail in chase, leaving the cutter to follow us how she could. Our masters were well acquainted with the shoals on the coast, and we threaded our way through them towards the enemy. We were within gun-shot, and had exchanged broadsides with the batteries, when the flotillas gained a small harbour, which prevented our making any further attempts. The *Dryad* made the signal to haul off; it was quite time, as we had not more than four hours daylight, and were entangled among the shoals. The breeze, which had been fresh, now increased very rapidly, and there was every appearance of a gale. We worked out as fast as we could, and by nine o'clock in the evening we were

clear of the sands, and in the open sea; but the gale had sprung up so rapidly that we were obliged to reduce our sail to close-reefed topsails. With the sands under our lee, it was necessary to draw off as fast as we could, and we therefore carried a heavy press of sail all the night—at last, the wind was so strong that we could only carry close-reefed maintop-sail and reefed fore-sail, and with the heavy sea, which had risen up, we felt that we were in extreme danger.

Daylight once more made its appearance. Our first object was to ascertain the position of the Dryad. For a long time we looked in vain; at last, a partial clearing up of the horizon on the lee bow discovered her, looming through the heavy atmosphere, more like a phantom ship than the work of mortal hands. She was a deep grey mass upon a lighter grey ground. Her top-masts were gone, and she was pitching and rising without appearing to advance under her courses and storm staysails.

“There she is, Sir,” said Mr. Wilson ;
“and if the gale lasts, good-by to her.”

“If the gale lasts, Mr. Wilson,” said I, in a low voice, “I suspect you may sing our requiem as well ; but we must trust to heaven and our own exertions. Pass along the lead-line, Mr. Hawkins.”

“Aye, aye, Sir,” replied the officer of the watch ; “how much out, Sir ?”

“Forty fathoms.”

The men ranged themselves along the lee bulwarks, chains, and gangway, and passed the deep sea lines from aft to the anchor stock forward. The deep sea lead was taken forward, and as soon as it was bent and ready, the ship was thrown up to the wind so as to check her way. “Heave,” and the lead was thrown, and as it descended, the line was dropt from the hands of the men, one after another, as the line drew aft ; but when it came to the hands of the master, who was on the quarter, instead of finding, as he expected, forty fathoms of water, he had to

haul in the slack line for such a length of time, that the lead was astern, and no proper soundings could be obtained.

One thing was, however, certain, which was, that we were in much shallower water than we had any idea of; and the master, much alarmed, desired the quarter-master to go into the chains and see if he could get soundings with the hand lead while the men were hauling in the deep sea line. The quarter-master was forestalled by Bob Cross, who, dropping into the chains, cleared the line, and swinging it but twice or thrice, for there was little or no way in the vessel, let it go.

The anxiety with which the descent of the line was watched by me, the master, and other of the officers who were hanging over the hammock rails, it would be difficult to describe. When sixteen fathoms were out, the lead sounded. Cross gathered up the slack line, and fourteen and a half fathoms was announced.

“Mr. Hillyer,” said I, “oblige me by coming down into the cabin.” The master followed me immediately. The chart was on the table in the fore-cabin.

“We must have gone to leeward dreadfully, Sir.”

“Yes,” replied I; “but the sweep of the currents in heavy gales is so tremendous, and so uncertain on this coast, that I am not surprised. We must have had a S.E. current, and probably we are hereabouts,” continued I, putting the point of the compass upon the spot.

“It seems hardly possible, Sir,” replied the master; “but still I fear it must be so—and if so,” continued he, drawing a deep sigh, “I’m afraid it’s all over with us, without a miracle in our favour.”

“I am of your opinion, Mr. Hillyer; but say nothing about it,” replied I; “the gale *may* moderate, the wind *may* shift, and if so, we *may* be saved. At all events, it’s no use telling bad news too soon, and therefore you’ll oblige me

by not saying any thing on the subject. A few hours will decide our fate."

"But the Dryad, she is good four miles to leeward of us, and the soundings decrease here so rapidly, that in an hour, with the sail she is under, she must go on shore."

"She has no chance, that's certain," replied I.

"I only hope it may be so thick, that we may not see her."

"Not a soul will be saved, Sir," replied the master, shuddering.

"I should say it were impossible, Mr. Hill-
yer; but we all owe heaven a death, and if they
go first and we go after them, at all events let
us do our duty until the time comes—but never
despair. As long as there is life there is hope;
so now let us go on deck and put as good a face
on it as we can."

CHAPTER XIX.

I RETURNED on deck, followed by the master. "The barometer is rising," said I aloud to the first lieutenant; "so I presume the gale will break about twelve o'clock."

"I am glad to hear of it, Sir, for we have quite enough of it," replied the first lieutenant.

"Do you see the Dryad?"

"No, Sir; it's quite thick again to leeward: we have not seen her these ten minutes."

Thank God for that, thought I, for they will never see her again. "What soundings had you last?"

"Fourteen fathoms, Sir."

"I expect we shall cross the tail of the bank

in much less," replied I; "but when once clear, we shall have sea room."

As the captain is an oracle in times of danger, the seamen caught every word which was uttered from my mouth; and what they gathered from what I said satisfied them that they were in no immediate danger. Nevertheless, the master walked the deck as if he was stupified with the impending crisis. No wonder, poor fellow; with a wife and family depending upon him for support, it is not to be expected that a man can look upon immediate dissolution without painful feelings. A sailor should never marry; or if he does, for the benefit of the service, his marriage should prove an unhappy one, and then he would become more reckless than before. As for my own thoughts, they may be given in a few words—they were upon the vanity of human wishes. Whatever I had done with the one object I had in view—whatever might have been my success had I lived—whether I might have been wedded to Minnie

some future day, or what may have resulted, good, bad, or indifferent, as to future, all was to be in a few hours cut short by the will of Heaven. In the next world there was neither marriage nor giving in marriage—in the next world, name, titles, wealth, every thing worldly was as nought—and all I had to do was to die like a man, and do my duty to the last, trusting to a merciful God to forgive me my sins and offences; and with this philosophy I stood prepared for the event.

About noon it again cleared up to leeward, but the Dryad was no longer to be seen: this was reported to me. As it was nearly three hours since we had last had a sight of her, I knew her fate too well—she had plenty of time to go on shore, and to be broken up by the heavy seas. I did however point my glass in the direction, and coolly observed, “She has rounded the tail of the bank, I presume, and has bore up. It was the best thing she could do.” I then asked the master if he had wound up his

chronometers, and went down into the cabin. I had not, however, been examining the chart more than a minute, when the officer of the watch came down and reported that we had shoaled to twelve fathoms.

“Very good, Mr. Hawkins; we shall be in shallower water yet. Let me know if there is any change in the soundings.”

As soon as the cabin door was again shut, I worked up the tide to see when it would change against us; I found that it had changed one hour at least. Then it will be sooner over, thought I, throwing down the pencil.

“Mr. Cross, the boatswain, wishes to speak to you, Sir,” said the sentry, opening the cabin door.

“Tell him to come in,” replied I. “Well, Cross, what’s the matter?”

“I was speaking to the first lieutenant about getting up a runner, Sir—the fore-stay is a good deal chafed; that is, if you think it’s of any use.”

“How do you mean of any use, Cross?”

“Why, Sir, although no one would suppose it from you—but if the face of the master (and he is not a faint-hearted man neither) is to be taken as a barometer, we shall all be in ‘kingdom come’ before long. I’ve cruized in these seas so often, that I pretty well guess where we are, Captain Keene.”

“Well, Cross, it’s no use denying that we are in a mess, and nothing but the wind going down or changing can get us out of it.”

“Just as I thought, Sir; well, it can’t be helped, so it’s no use fretting about it. I think myself that the gale is breaking, and that we shall have fine weather by to-morrow morning.”

“That will be rather too late, Cross; for I think we shall be done for in three or four hours, if not sooner.”

“Eleven fathoms, Sir,” said the officer of the watch, coming in hastily.

“Very well, Mr. Hawkins; let her go through the water,” replied I.

As soon as the cabin door was again shut I said, "You see, Cross, the tide is now against us, and this will not last long."

"No, Sir; we shall strike in five fathoms with this heavy sea."

"I know we shall; but I do not wish to dishearten the men before it is necessary, and then we must do our best."

"You won't be offended, I am sure, by my asking, Captain Keene, what you think of doing."

"Not at all, Cross; it is my intention to explain it to the ship's company before I do it. I may as well take your opinion upon it now. As soon as we are in six fathoms, I intend to cut away the masts and anchor."

"That's our only chance, Sir, and if it is well done, and the gale abates, it may save some of us; but how do you intend to anchor?"

"I shall back the best bower with the sheet, and let go the small bower at the same time

that I do the sheet, so as to ride an even strain."

"You can't do better, Sir; but that will require time for preparation, to be well done. Do you think we shall have time, if you wait till we are in six fathoms?"

"I don't know but you are right, Cross, and I think it would be better to commence our preparations at once."

"Ten fathoms, Sir," reported the officer of the watch.

"Very well, I will be on deck directly."

"Well, Sir, we must now go to our duty; and as we may chance not to talk to one another again, Sir," said Cross, "I can only say God bless you, and I hope that if we do not meet again in this world, we shall in heaven, or as near to it as possible. Good-by, Sir."

"Good-by, Cross," replied I, shaking him by the hand; "we'll do our duty at all events. So now for my last dying speech."

Cross quitted the cabin, and I followed him. As soon as I was on deck, I desired the first lieutenant to turn the hands up, and send them aft. When they were all assembled with Cross at their head, I stood on one of the carronades, and said: "My lads, I have sent for you, because I consider that, although the gale is evidently breaking, we are shoaling our water so fast, that we are in danger of going on shore before the gale does break. Now, what I intend to do as our best chance, is to cut away the masts and anchor as soon as we are in six fathoms water; perhaps we may then ride it out. At all events, we must do our best, and put our trust in Providence. But, my lads, you must be aware, that in times of difficulty it is important that we should be all cool and collected, that you must adhere to your discipline, and obey your officers to the last; if you do not, every thing will go wrong instead of right. You have proved yourselves an excellent set of men, and I'm sure you will continue so to do.

It is possible we may not have to cut away our masts, or to anchor ; still, we must make every preparation in case it is necessary, and I have, therefore, sent for you, to explain my intentions, and to request that you will all assist me to the best of your abilities ; and I feel convinced that you will, and will do your duty like British seamen. That's all I have to say, my lads. Pipe down, Mr. Cross."

The ship's company went forward in silence. They perceived the full extent of the danger. The first lieutenant and boatswain employed a portion in backing the best bower anchor with the sheet ; the others ^{roued} [^] up the cables from the tiers, and coiled them on the main-deck, clear for running. All hands were busily employed, and employment made them forget their fears. The work was done silently, but orderly and steadily. In the meantime we had shoaled to eight fathoms, and it was now nearly three o'clock ; but as it was summer time, the days were long. Indeed, when the weather was

fine, there was little or no night, and the weather was warm, which was all in our favour.

When every thing was reported ready, I went round to examine and ascertain if the cables would run clear. Satisfied that all was right, I then picked out the men, and appointed those who were most trustworthy to the stations of importance ; and, having so done, I then returned to the quarter-deck, and called up the carpenter and some of the topmen to be ready with the axes to cut away the masts and lashings of the booms and boats. Just as these orders were completed, the gale blew fiercer than ever. We were now in seven fathoms water, and pressed heavy by the gale.

I stood at the break of the gangway, the first lieutenant and master by my side, and Cross a little forward, watching my eye. The men in the chains continued to give the soundings in a clear, steady voice, " By the mark seven," " Quarter less seven," " And a half six." At last, the man in the chains next to me, a fine

old fore-castle-man, gave the sounding "By the mark six," and he gave it with a louder voice than before, with a sort of defiance, as much as to say, The time is come, let the elements do their worst.

The time was come. "Silence, fore and aft. Every man down under the half-deck, except those stationed. Cut away the boom lashings, and clear the boats." This was soon done, and reported. "Now then, my lads, be steady. Cut away the lanyards in the chains."

One after another the lanyards and backstays were severed; the masts groaned and creaked, and then the fore-mast and main-mast were over the side almost at the same time; the mizen followed, as the frigate broached to and righted, leaving the ship's deck a mass of wreck and confusion; but no one was hurt, from the precautions which had been taken, the mast having been cut away before we rounded to to anchor, as, otherwise, they would have fallen aft, and not gone clear of the ship.

“Stand by the best bower. Stand clear of the cable. Let go the anchor.”

As soon as the best bower cable was nearly out, the sheet anchor and small bower were let go at the same moment, and the result was to be ascertained.

CHAPTER XX.

THE frigate was head to wind, rising and pitching with the heavy sea, but not yet feeling the strain of the cables; the masts lay rolling and beating alongside.

The ship's company had most of them returned on deck, to view their impending fate, and the carpenters, who had already received their orders, were battening down the hatchways on the main-deck. In a minute, the frigate rode to her anchors, and as soon as the strain was on the cables, she dipped, and a tremendous sea broke over her bows, deluging us fore and aft, nearly filling the main-deck, and washing the carpenters away from their half-completed

work. A second and a third followed, rolling aft, so as to almost bury the vessel, sweeping away the men, who clung to the cordage and guns, and carrying many of them overboard.

I had quitted the gangway, where there was no hold, and had repaired to the main bitts, behind the stump of the main-mast. Even in this position I should not have been able to hold on, if it had not been for Bob Cross, who was near me, and who passed a rope round my body as I was sweeping away; but the booms and boats which had been cut adrift in case of the ship driving on shore broadside, were driven aft with the last tremendous sea, and many men on the quarter-deck were crushed and mangled.

After the third sea had swept over us, there was a pause, and Cross said to me, "We had better go down on the main-deck, Captain Keene, and get the half-ports open if possible." We did so, and, with great difficulty, found the people to help us; for, as it may be ima-

gined, the confusion was now very great ; but the carpenters were again collected, and the half-ports got out, and then the battening down was completed ; for, although she continued to ship seas fore and aft, they were not so heavy as the three first, which had so nearly swamped her.

I again went on deck, followed by Cross, who would not leave me. Most of the men had lashed themselves to the guns and belaying pins, but I looked in vain for the first lieutenant and master ; they were standing at the gangway at the time of the first sea breaking over us, and it is to be presumed that they were washed overboard, for I never saw them again.

We had hardly been on deck and taken our old position at the bitts, when the heavy seas again poured over us, but the booms having been cleared, and the ports on the main-deck open, they did not sweep us with the same force as before.

“ She cannot stand this long, Bob,” said I, as we clung to the bitts.

“ No, Sir ; the cables must part with such a heavy strain ; or if they do not, we shall drag our anchors till we strike on the sands.”

“ And then we shall go to pieces ?”

“ Yes, Sir ; but do not forget to get to the wreck of the masts, if you possibly can. The best chance will be there.”

“ Bad ’s the best, Cross ; however, that was my intention.”

The reader will be surprised at my having no conversation with any other party but Cross ; but the fact was, that, although it was only occasionally that a heavy sea poured over us, we were blinded by the continual spray in which the frigate was enveloped, and which prevented us not only from seeing our own position, but even a few feet from us ; and, as if any one who had not a firm hold when the seas poured over the deck, was almost certain to be washed over-

board, every man clung to where he was ; indeed, there were not fifty men on deck ; for those who had not been washed overboard by the first seas, had hastened to get under the half-deck, and many had been washed overboard in the attempt.

The most painful part was to hear the groaning and cries for help of the poor fellows who laid jammed under the heavy spars and boats which had been washed aft, and to whom it was impossible to afford any relief without the assistance of a large body of men. But all I have described since the anchors were let go occurred in a few minutes.

On a sudden, the frigate heeled over to starboard, and at the same time a sea broke over her chesstree, which nearly drowned us where we were clinging. As soon as the pouring off of the water enabled us to recover our speech, “ She has parted, Cross, and all is over with us,” said I.

“ Yes, Sir ; as soon as she strikes, she will

break up in ten minutes. We must not stay here, as she will part amidships."

I felt the truth of the observation, and, waiting until a heavy sea had passed over us, contrived to gain the after ladder, and descend. As soon as we were on the main-deck, we crawled to the cabin, and seated ourselves by the after gun, Cross having made a hold on to a ring bolt for us with his silk neck-handkerchief.

There were many men in the cabin, silently waiting their doom. They knew that all was over, that nothing could be done, yet they still contrived to touch their hats respectfully to me as I passed.

"My lads," said I, as soon as I had secured my hold, "the cables have parted, and the ship will strike and go to pieces in a very short time; recollect that the masts to leeward are your best chance."

Those who were near me said, "Thank you, Captain Keene;" but the words were scarcely

out of their mouths, when a shock passed through the whole vessel, and communicated itself to our very hearts. The ship had struck on the sand, and the beams and timbers had not ceased trembling and groaning, when a sea struck her larboard broadside, throwing her over on her beam-ends, so that the starboard side of the main-deck and the guns were under water.

It would be impossible after this to detail what occurred in a clear and correct manner, as the noise and confusion were so terrible. At every sea hurled against the sides of the vessel, the resistance to them became less. What with the crashing of the beams, the breaking up of the timbers, and the guns to windward, as their fastenings gave way, tumbling with a tremendous crash to leeward, and passing through the ship's sides, the occasional screams mixed with the other noise, the pouring, dashing, and washing of the waters, the scene was appalling. At last, one louder crash than any of the former

announced that the vessel had yielded to the terrific force of the waves, and had parted amidships. After this there was little defence against them, even where we were clinging, for the waters poured in, as if maddened by their success, through the passage formed by the separation of the vessel, and came bounding on, as if changing their direction on purpose to overwhelm us. As the two parts of the vessel were thrown higher up, the shocks were more severe, and indeed the waves appeared to have more power than before, in consequence of their being so increased in weight from the quantity of sand which was mixed up with them. Another crash ! the sides of the after part of the vessel had given way, and the heavy guns, disengaged, flew to leeward, and we found ourselves without shelter from the raging waters.

The part of the wreck on which Cross and I were sitting was so completely on its beam-ends, that the deck was within a trifle of being perpendicular. To walk was impossible : all

that we could do was to slide down into the water to leeward; but little was to be gained by that, as there was no egress. We therefore remained for more than an hour in the same position, wearied with clinging, and the continual suffocation we received from the waves, as they deluged us. We perceived that the wreck was gradually settling down deeper and deeper in the sand; it was more steady in consequence, but at the same time the waves had more power over the upper part; and so it proved; for one enormous sea came in, blowing up the quarter-deck over our heads, tearing away the planking and timbers, and hurling them to leeward. This, at all events, set us free, although it exposed us more than before; we could now see about us, that is, we could see to leeward, and Cross pointed out to me the mainmast tossing about in the boiling water, with the main-top, now buried, and now rising out clear. I nodded my head in assent. He

made a sign to say that he would go first after the next wave had passed over us.

I found myself alone, and as soon as I had cleared my eyes of the salt-water, I perceived Cross in the surge to leeward, making for the floating mast. He gained it, and waved his hand. I immediately followed him, and, after a short buffet, gained a place by his side, just behind the main-top, which afforded us considerable shelter from the seas. Indeed, as the main-mast was in a manner anchored by the lee rigging to the wreck of the vessel, the latter served as a breakwater, and the sea was, therefore, comparatively smooth, and I found my position infinitely more agreeable than when I was clinging on the wreck. I could now breathe freely, as it was seldom I was wholly under water, neither was it necessary, as before, to cling for your life.

On looking round me, I found that about twenty men were hanging on to the mast; many

of them appeared quite exhausted, and had not strength left to obtain a more favourable berth. The position taken by Cross and myself was very secure, being between the main-top and the cat-harpings, and the water was so warm, that we did not feel the occasional immersion ; five other men were close to us, but not a word was said,—indeed, hardly a recognition exchanged. At that time, we thought only of immediate preservation, and had little feeling for anybody else.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE night was now coming on ; the rolling waves, changed from the yellow tinge given by the sand to green and then to purple ; at last all was black except the white foaming breakers.

Exhausted with fatigue, it had not been dark more than two hours, when I felt an irresistible desire to sleep, and I have no doubt that I did slumber in this position, half in and half out of the water, for some time, for when I was roused up by losing my balance, I looked above and perceived that the sky was clear, and the stars shining brightly. I then looked around me, and it was evident that the water was not so agitated as it had been ; the wind too

had subsided, its roaring had ceased, although it still whistled strong.

“Cross !” said I.

“Here I am, Captain Keene, close under your lee.”

“The gale is broke, we shall have fair weather before the morning.”

“Yes, Sir; I have thought so some time.”

“Thank God for his mercy, we must trust that he will not leave us here to perish miserably.”

“No, I hope not,” replied Cross; “let us trust in him, but I confess I see but little chance.”

“So have many others, yet they have been saved, Cross,” replied I.

“Very true, Sir,” replied he: “I wish it was daylight.”

We had, however, three or four hours to wait, but during that time the wind gradually subsided, and then went down to a light and fitful breeze. At dawn of day the mast rose and fell with the swell of the sea, which still

heaved after the late commotion, but without any run in any particular direction, for it was now calm. I had been sitting on the mast with my back against the futtock shrouds; I now rose up with difficulty, for I was sorely bruised, and stood upon the mast clear from the water, to look around me. About thirty yards from us was the wreck of the fore-mast with many men clinging to it. The mizen-mast had broken adrift. The fore part of the frigate was several feet above water, and the bowsprit steeved in the air; of the after part, there were but three or four broken timbers to be seen clear of the water, so deep had it been buried in the sand.

Cross had risen on his feet, and was standing by me, when we were hailed from the wreck of the fore-mast, "Main-mast, a-hoy."

"Halloo!" replied Cross.

"Have you got the captain on board?"

"Yes," replied Bob; "all alive and hearty;" a faint huzzah, which was the return, affected me sensibly. That my men should think of

me when in such a position was soothing to my feelings; but as I looked at them on the other mast and those around me, and calculated that there could not be more than forty men left out of such a noble ship's company, I could have wept. But it was time for action: "Cross," said I, "now that it is calm, I think we shall be better on the fore part of the frigate than here, half in and half out of water. The forecastle is still remaining, and the weather bulwarks will shelter the men; besides, if any vessels should come in sight, we should more easily be able to make signals, and to attract their attention."

"Very true, Sir," replied Cross; "and as there are many men here who cannot hold on much longer, we must try if we cannot haul them on board. Do you feel strong enough to swim to the wreck?"

"Yes, quite, Cross."

"Then we'll start together, Sir, and see how matters are."

I dropped into the sea, followed by Cross, and as the distance from us was not forty yards, we soon gained the wreck of the fore part of the frigate; the lee gunnel was just above water; we clambered over it, and found the deck still whole; the weather portion as white as snow, and quite dry; we gained the weather bulwarks, and looked in the offing in case there should be any vessel, but we could see nothing.

“Now, Sir, we had better hail, and tell all those who can swim to come to us.”

We did so, and six men from the main-mast and nine from the fore-mast soon joined us.

“Now, my lads,” said I, “we must look after those who cannot get here, and try to save them. Get all the ends of ropes from the belaying pins, bend them on one to another, and then we will return and make the men fast, and you shall haul them on board.”

This was soon done; Cross and I took the end in our hands and swam back to the main-

mast. One of the topmen, with a broken arm, was the first that was made fast, and when the signal was given, hauled through the water to the wreck ; six or seven more followed in succession. Two men swam back every time with the rope, and accompanied those who were hauled on board, that they might not sink. There were many more hanging to different parts of the main-mast, but on examination they were found to be quite dead. We sent on board all that shewed any symptoms of life, and then we swam to the fore-mast, and assisted those who were hanging to it. In about two hours, our task was completed, and we mustered twenty-six men on the wreck.

We were glad to shelter ourselves under the bulwark, where we all laid huddled up together ; before noon, most of the poor fellows had forgotten their sufferings in a sound sleep. Cross, I, and the man with the broken arm, were the only three awake ; the latter was in too

much pain to find repose, and, moreover, suffered from extreme thirst.

A breeze now sprang up from the southward, which cheered our spirits, as without wind there was little chance of receiving any assistance. Night again came on, and the men still slept. Cross and I laid down, and were glad to follow their example: the night was cold, and when we laid down we did not yet feel much from hunger or thirst, but when the morning dawned, we woke in suffering, not from hunger, but from thirst. Everybody cried out for water. I told the men that talking would only make them feel it more, and advised them to put their shirt-sleeves in their mouths, and suck them, and then I climbed upon the bulwarks to see if there was any thing in sight. I knew that the greatest chance was that the cutter would be looking after us, but, at the same time, it was not very likely that she would come so near to the sands.

I had been an hour on the gunnel, when

Cross came up to me. "It's banking up, Sir, to the southward: I hope we are not going to have any more bad weather."

"I have no fear of a gale, although we may have thick weather," replied I; "that would be almost as bad for us, as we should perish on the wreck before we are discovered."

"I am going to lower myself down into the galley, Captain Keene, to see if I can find any thing."

"I fear you will not be successful," replied I, "for the coppers and ranges are all carried away."

"I know that, Sir, but I have been thinking of the cook's closet we had built up above the bowsprit. I know that he used to stow away many things there, and perhaps there may be something. I believe the shortest way will be to go to leeward, and swim round to it."

Cross then left me, and I continued to look out. About an hour afterwards he returned, and told me that he had easily opened it with

his knife, and had found eight or nine pounds of raw potatoes and a bucketful of slush. "We are not hungry enough to eat this now, Sir, but there is enough to keep the life in us all for three or four days at least ; that is, if we could get water, and I expect we shall feel the want of that dreadfully in a short time. I would give a great deal if I could only find a drop to give that poor fellow Anderson, with his broken arm ; it is terribly swelled, and he must suffer very much."

"Did you find any thing in the closet to put water into, Cross, in case we should get any ?"

"Yes ; there's two or three kids, and some small breakers, Captain Keene."

"Well, then, you had better get them ready ; for those clouds rise so fast, that we may have rain before morning, and if so, we must not lose the chance."

"Why, it does look like rain, Sir," replied

Cross. "I'll take one or two of the men with me to assist in getting them up."

I watched the horizon till night again set in. We were all very faint and distressed for water, and the cool of the evening somewhat relieved us; the breeze, too, was fresh. The men had remained quietly in the shade, as I had advised them; but, although patient, they evidently suffered much. Once more we all attempted to forget ourselves in repose. I was soundly asleep, when I was woke up by Cross.

"Captain Keene, it is raining, and it will soon rain much harder; now, if you will order the men, they will soon collect water enough."

"Call them up immediately, Cross; we must not lose this providential succour. It may save all our lives."

The men were soon on the alert: the rain came down in a steady shower; and as soon as they were wet through, they took off their shirts, and dabbling them into the water as

it ran down to leeward, squeezed it out into their mouths, until their wants were satisfied, and then, under the direction of Cross, commenced filling the three breakers and four tubs which had been brought up. They had time to fill them, and to spare, for the rain continued till the morning. The tubs and breakers were securely slung under the fore-bitts for future use, and they then continued to drink till they could drink no more.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE sun rose and chased away the clouds, and the heat was overpowering. What would have been our situation if it had not pleased heaven to refresh us?

The consequence of their thirst being appeased made the demand for food imperative, and a raw potatoe was given to each man. The day passed, and so did a third and fourth, and our hopes began to fail us, when at daylight the next morning I spied a sail to the westward. The breeze was light, but the vessel was evidently coming down towards us, and before noon we made it out to be the cutter.

We then sat on the bulwarks and held out a

white shirt, as a signal to attract their attention. When about three miles from us, the cutter rounded to, not appearing to notice us, and for two hours we were left in this state of maddening anxiety and suspense, when at last we perceived her bows pay off, and she again stood towards us. They had at last seen us, and as soon as they had run down to within three cables' length, the boat was lowered and sent to take us off. In three trips we were all on board, and devoutly thanked heaven for our preservation.

The lieutenant of the cutter said that at first the sun prevented his seeing us, which I believe was the fact; but he acknowledged that he had no idea that we had been wrecked, although he thought that the *Dryad* was, as he had seen a mast floating, and sending a boat to look at it, found her name on the cross-trees. We were, however, too much exhausted to enter into much conversation. As soon as we had been supplied with food, we were all put

to bed in their hammocks ; the first lieutenant resigned his standing bed-place to me. A long sleep recovered me, and I felt little the worse for what I had suffered, and sat down to a breakfast at noon on the following day with a good appetite. The cutter had, by my directions, shaped a course for the island of Heligoland, where we should find means of returning to England.

“ I have letters for you, Captain Keene,” said the lieutenant, “ if you are well enough to read them.”

“ Thank you, Mr. D—— ; I am now quite well, and will be happy to have them.”

The lieutenant brought me a large packet, and I took a position on the sofa to read them comfortably while he went on deck. I first opened those on service—those, of course, had little interest for me, now that I had lost my ship—I skimmed them over, and then threw them on the table one after another. There were three private letters from England, one of

which was in Lord de Versely's hand-writing ; I opened it first. It was very kind, but short, complaining that he had not been very well lately. The second was from my mother. I read it ; it contained nothing of importance ; and then I took up the third, which had a black seal. I opened it ; it was from Mr. Warden, acquainting me that Lord de Versely had expired very suddenly, on his return from the House of Lords, of an ossification of the heart.

In my weak state this blow was too much for me, and I fainted. How long I remained in that state I cannot say ; but when I came to my senses I found myself still down in the cabin. I rallied as well as I could, but it was some time before I could take up the letter again, and finish it. He stated that his lordship had left me all his personal property, which was all that he could leave—that the library and wines were of some value, and that there would be about a thousand pounds left at the banker's when the funeral expenses and debts had been

paid. “ Oh ! if he could but have left me his family name ! ” cried I, “ it was all I coveted. My father ! my kind father ! I may really say, who will lament your loss as I do ? ” I threw myself on the pillow of the sofa, and for a long while shed bitter tears, not unmixed, I must own ; for my grief at his death was increased by my disappointment in having for ever lost the great object of my wishes.

The lieutenant of the cutter came down into the cabin, and I was compelled to hide my emotion. I complained of head-ache and weakness, and collecting the letters, I again laid down in the standing bed-place, and drawing the curtains, I was left to my own reflections. But there was a sad tumult in my mind. I could not keep my ideas upon one subject for a moment. I was feverish and excited, and at last my head was so painful, that I could think no more. Fortunately exhaustion threw me again into a sound sleep ; and I did not wake till the next morning. When I did, I had to recollect where

I was, and what had happened. I knew that there was something dreadful which had occurred; again it flashed into my memory. Lord de Versely was dead. I groaned, and fell back on the pillow.

“Are you very ill, Captain Keene?” said a voice close to me. I opened the curtains, and perceived that it was Cross, who was standing by my bedside.

“I am indeed, Cross, very ill; I have very bad news. Lord de Versely is dead.”

“That is bad news, Sir,” replied Cross—
“very bad news, worse than losing the frigate. But, Captain Keene, we must have our ups and downs in this world. You have had a long run of good fortune, and you must not be surprised at a change. It is hard to lose your frigate and your father at the same time, but you have not lost your life, which is a great mercy to be thankful for.”

I turned away, for my heart was full of bitterness. Cross, perceiving my mood, left

me, and I remained in a state of sullen indifference, never rising from the bed-place during the remainder of the time that I was on board.

On the second day we arrived at Heligoland, and I was requested by the governor to take up my quarters with him, until an opportunity occurred for my return to England. My spirits were, however, so much weighed down, that I could not rally. I brooded over my misfortunes, and I thought that the time was now come when I was to meet a reverse of the prosperity which I had so long enjoyed.

The sudden death of Lord de Versely, at the age of fifty-six, left me without a patron, and had destroyed all my hopes centred in him. The object of my ambition was, I considered, for ever lost to me. There was now no chance of my being acknowledged as a member of his family. Then the loss of so fine a frigate, and such a noble ship's company. That I should be honourably acquitted by a court-martial I had not a doubt, but I had no chance of future

employment : for, now that Lord de Versely was dead, I had no one to support my claims. My prospects, therefore, in the service were all gone, as well as the visions I had indulged in. I dwelt with some pleasure upon the idea that Lord de Versely had left me his personal property—it proved his regard ; but I wanted his family name, and I preferred that to thousands per annum. The second day after our arrival, Cross called, and was admitted. He found me in bad spirits, and tried all he could to rouse me. At last he said, “ As for the loss of the frigate, Captain Keene, no human endeavour could have saved her, and no one could have done his duty better than you did, as the court-martial will prove ; but, Sir, I think it would be proper just now to shew that your zeal for the service is as strong as ever.”

“ And how am I to do that, Cross ?”

“ Why, Sir, you know as well as we all do, how the Frenchmen are going to the wall ;

that they have been thrashed out of Russia, and that they are retreating everywhere. They say that they have left Hamburg, and I understand that the gun-brigs here are going on an expedition from this island, either to-morrow or next day, to storm the batteries of Cuxhaven, and so create a diversion, as they call it—and very good diversion it is—licking those French rascals. Now, Captain Keene, if I may take the liberty of saying so, would it not be as well to take as many of your men as are able to go and join the storming party? Much better than sitting here all day, melancholy, and doing nothing.”

“It’s the first I’ve heard of it, Cross; are you sure you are correct?”

“How should you hear it, Sir, shut up here, and seeing nobody? It’s true enough, Sir; they were telling off the men as I came up, and I think they start at daylight to-morrow.”

“Well, Cross, I will think of it, and let you

know my decision if you call here in half an hour."

Cross left me, and I was still undecided, when the governor called to pay me a visit. After the first exchange of civilities, I asked him if the report was true that there was an expedition about to proceed to Cuxhaven. His reply was, that the Russians had entered Hamburg, which the French had evacuated on the eleventh, and that the French garrisons at Cuxhaven were reported to be in a very distressed state, and, in consequence, the Blazer and another gun-brig were about to proceed to attack the forts.

Hamburg! thought I; why, Minnie Vanderwelt is at Hamburg with her father. I will go, and try if I cannot get to Hamburg. The remembrance of Minnie gave a spur to my energies, and created a new stimulus. I then told the governor that I had a few men doing nothing; that I would join them to the expedition,

and serve as a volunteer. The Governor thanked me for my zeal, and I left him to go down and communicate my intentions to the commanding officer of the gun-brig, who expressed himself most happy at my assistance and co-operation.

CHAPTER XXIII.

As neither my men nor I had any luggage to hamper us—for we had just the clothes we stood in—we were not long getting ready. We started next morning, and on entering the river, found that the French had destroyed their flotilla, and soon afterwards we were invited by the people to come on shore, and take possession of the batteries which the French had evacuated. I remained with Cross and my men on shore at Cuxhaven, while the brigs went up the river, in pursuit of a privateer.

After a day or two, tired of inactivity, and anxious to arrive at Hamburg, I proposed to Cross that he should accompany me, which he

cheerfully acceded to. I had drawn a bill at Heligoland, so that we were in no want of money, and we set off on our expedition. We had not, however, proceeded far, before we were informed that the road to Hamburg was so full of French troops, scattered about, that it would be impossible to gain the city without we made a *détour*. As we knew that our throats would be cut by these disorganized parties, we followed the advice given to us, walking from village to village, until we had put Hamburg between us and the river. But when there, we found that we could not approach the imperial city, but were obliged to direct our steps more inland. At last, we heard that the inhabitants of the town of Lunenburg had risen, and driven out the French garrison, and I resolved to proceed there, as it was more advisable than being continually in danger of being picked up by the French stragglers, who were committing every enormity that could be imagined.

We arrived safe ; stated who we were to the

authorities, and were well received ; but we had not been there more than two days, when the rejoicings and bragging of the town's-people, on account of the late victory over the French garrison, were turned to consternation by the intelligence that General Moraud was advancing with a considerable force to re-take the town. The panic was so great, that all idea of defence was in vain ; and at the very time that I was entreating them to make a stand, the French troops poured in, and two cuirassiers galloped up, and seized upon Cross and me. A few minutes afterwards, General Moraud came up, and inquired, in a rough tone, who we were. I replied in French, that we were English officers.

“Take them away,” said he, “and secure them well. I’ll make an example here that sha’n’t be forgotten.”

We were taken to the guard-room, where we remained shut up for the night. The next morning, one of the cuirassiers looked into our

cell. I asked him whether we could not have something to eat. “Cela ne vaut pas la peine. Mon ami, vous n’aurez pas le temps pour la digestion ; dans un demi-heure vous serez fusillés.”

“May I ask the English of that, Captain Keene ?” replied Cross.

“Yes, it is very pleasant. He says that it’s not worth while eating any thing, as we shall be shot in half an hour.”

“Well, I suppose they’ll shoot us first, and try us afterwards,” replied Cross. “Won’t they give us a reason ?”

“I suspect not, Cross ; I am sorry that I have got you into this scrape ; as for myself, I care little about it.”

“I am sorry for poor Jane, Sir,” replied Cross ; “but we all owe Heaven a death, and, after all, it’s not worth making a fuss about.”

Our conversation was here interrupted by a party of French soldiers, who opened the door and ordered us to follow them. We had not far to go, for we were led out to the Grand

Place before the prison, where we found the French troops drawn up, and General Moraud, with his officers round him, standing in the centre. At twenty yards' distance, and surrounded by the troops, which did not amount to more than three hundred, were thirty of the principal inhabitants of the town, pinioned, and handkerchiefs tied over their eyes, preparatory to their being shot, this being the terrible example that the governor had threatened.

"Look, Cross," said I, "what a handful of men these Frenchmen have retaken the town with. Why, if we had resisted, we might have laughed at them."

"They won't laugh any more, I expect," replied Bob.

"*Allons*," said the corporal to us.

"Where?" replied I.

"To your friends there," replied he, pointing to the town's-people who were about to be shot.

“ I wish to speak to the general,” replied I, resisting.

“ No, no—you must go.”

“ I will speak to the general,” replied I, pushing the corporal on one side, and walking to where the general was standing.

“ Well,” said the general, fiercely.

“ I wish to know, Sir,” replied I, “ by what law you are guided in shooting us. We are English officers here on duty to assist against the French, and at the most can only be prisoners of war. Upon what grounds do you order us to be shot ?”

“ As spies,” replied the general.

“ I am no spy, Sir ; I am a post-captain in the English navy, who joined with the seamen saved from the wreck of my frigate in the attack upon Cuxhaven, and there is my boatswain, who came up with me to go to Hamburg. At all events, I am fully justified in siding against the French, and to shoot us

will be a murder, which will not fail to be revenged."

"You may pass yourself off as the captain of a frigate, but your dress disproves it, and I have better information. You are two spies, and smugglers, and therefore you will be shot."

"I tell you before all your officers that I am Captain Keene, of the *Circe* frigate, belonging to His Britannic Majesty, and no spy: if you choose to shoot me now, I leave my death to be revenged by my country."

At this moment, an officer in naval uniform stepped forward and looked me in the face. "General Moraud," said he, "what that officer says is true: he is Captain Keene, and I was prisoner on board of his vessel, and I also know the other man as well."

"Captain Vangilt, I do not request your interference," replied the general.

"But, general, as an officer in the marine of the Emperor, it is my duty to state to you,

that you are deceived, and that this officer is the person that he states himself to be. Messieurs," continued Captain Vangilt, addressing those about the general, "I assure you it is true, and I am under the greatest obligation to this officer, for his kindness and humanity when I was his prisoner."

"I recognize you now, Mr. Vangilt," replied I; "and I thank you for your evidence."

"You see, General, he knows me by name; I must demand the life of this British officer."

The other officers then spoke to the general, who heard all they had to say, and then, with a sardonic grin, replied, "Gentlemen, he may be an officer, but still he is a spy."

At that moment, an orderly came up on horseback, and dismounting, gave a note to the general. "*Sacre bleu*," cried he; "then we'll have our revenge first at all events. Soldiers, take these two men and put them in the centre with the others."

Vangilt pleaded and entreated in vain: at last,

in his rage, he called the general "a coward, and a madman."

"Captain Vangilt, you will answer that at some other time," replied the general: "at present, we will carry our will into execution."

"Lead them away." Vangilt then covered his face with his hands, and all the other officers shewed signs of great disgust.

"Farewell, Vangilt," said I, in French; "I thank you for your interference, although you have not succeeded with the *scoundrel*."

"Take them away," roared the general.

At that moment, the report of musketry was heard in dropping shots.

"Well, if ever I saw such a bloody villain," said Cross. "Take that, at all events," continued Bob, shying his hat right into the general's face. "I only wish it was a 32-pounder, you murdering thief."

The rage of the general may easily be imagined. Once more he gave his orders, drawing his sword in a menacing way at his own

soldiers, who now forced us towards the part of the square, where the other victims were collected. As soon as we were there, they wanted to blind our eyes, but that both I and Bob positively refused, and a delay was created by our resistance. The musketry was now approaching much nearer, and a few seconds afterwards the general gave the word for the party to advance who were to execute the sentence.

The other prisoners kneeled down, but I and Cross would not, and while we were resisting, the general repeated his order to fire; but the men were confused with the advance of the enemy, and the impossibility to fire, while Cross and I not only resisted the soldiers, but held them so fast, that, had the party fired, they must have shot them as well as us. A cry to arms was given, and the troops all wheeled round in front to repel the enemy. A loud hurrah was followed by an inpouring of some hundred Cossacks with their long spears, who

in a few seconds charged and routed the French, who retreated in the greatest confusion by the different streets which led into the Grand Place.

“Hurrah ! we are saved,” cried Cross, snatching up a musket that had been dropped by a soldier ; I did the same, and pursued the retreating French, till a bullet through my leg put a stop to my progress. I called to Cross, who came to my assistance, and he helped me back to the Grand Place, which was now clear of troops.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE Cossacks having divided and gone in pursuit of the French, I pointed out to Cross a hotel, and requested him to help me there. As we crossed the square, strewn with the dead and wounded, we passed close to General Moraud, who was breathing his last.

“See, Cross,” said I, “there is retribution : he intended that we should fall where he now lies.”

The general recognized us, gave a heavy groan, and turning on his back, fell dead.

As soon as I gained the hotel, I was taken up into a room and made as comfortable as I could be until my wound could be dressed.

“We’re well out of it this time, Sir,” said Cross.

“Yes, indeed, Bob ; this has indeed been a miraculous preservation, and we ought to thank Heaven for it.”

“Why, Captain Keene, I thought just now you did not care whether you lived or died.”

“No more I did at that time, Cross; but when we are so wonderfully preserved, we cannot think but that we are preserved for better things; and as Providence has interfered, it points out to us that it is our duty to live.”

“Well, I’m glad to hear you say that, Sir. There’s all the troops coming back : what queer-looking chaps they are, with their long lances and long beards.”

“Yes ; they are Cossacks : Russian irregular cavalry.”

“Irregular enough, I don’t doubt ; but they spitted the Frenchmen nicely ; they look exactly what I thought the Pope of Rome was like.”

“Cross, call the master of the hotel, and tell

him to come here." When the man came, I desired him to let the commander of the allied troops know that an English captain was wounded, and required surgical assistance. The master of the hotel went to the burgomaster, who was one of those who had been ordered to be shot, and the burgomaster, who was now in company with the Russian commander, made known what I required. In about an hour a surgeon came, and my wound was dressed; the burgomaster called soon afterwards, and expressed his obligation to me; "For," said he, "if you had not created the delay, which you did by your resistance, it would have been all over with us by this time."

"You have to thank a Dutch naval officer, of the name of Vangilt," replied I; "it is he who saved us all, and if he is not hurt, you must be kind to him, and bring him to me. I will get him his parole, if he is a prisoner. Will you see to it, burgomaster?"

"I will," replied he, "as soon as we are a

little more tranquil ; but what with fright and confusion, none of us know what we are about. You were right, Sir, in persuading us to defend ourselves ; we might easily have beaten off the small force of General Moraud, but we thought he had ten thousand men, at least. We will do better another time, but the French are now in full retreat everywhere.”

That night, after dusk, Captain Vangilt came into my room : he had been a prisoner, but the burgomaster made inquiries, and let him out, which, as chief magistrate, he had the power to do. Vangilt embraced me with much warmth, and expressed his regret that he could not persuade that wretch, Moraud, from his murderous intentions.

“ It came to the same thing, Vangilt ; I owe you my life, for if you had not created the delay, we should have been shot.”

“ That’s true,” replied he. “ How fortunate it was, that, as my squadron of gun-boats were destroyed, I consented to join Moraud with

what men I could collect, to surprise the town. Are you badly wounded?"

"No, not seriously, I believe; I hope to be able to get to Hamburg in a few days."

"There is more than one there who will be delighted to see you."

"Is Mr. Vanderwelt alive, and well?"

"Oh, yes; and Minnie, my pretty cousin, is still unmarried." Vangilt smiled as he made this reply.

"I must ask for your parole, Vangilt, and then you can go to Hamburg with us."

"With all my heart," replied he; "for we are tired of war, and as I'm a Dutchman and not a Frenchman, I care little for the reverses we have met with; all I hope is, that Holland may become a kingdom again, and not a French state, as it is now."

The next day I was visited by the Russian commandant, who very willingly granted me the parole of Vangilt. In a week I was well enough to travel by slow journeys to Ham-

burg, lying on mattresses in a small covered waggon, and escorted by Cross and Vangilt. A few hours before my arrival, Vangilt went ahead to give notice of my coming, and on the evening of the second day I found myself in a luxurious chamber, with every comfort, in the company of Mr. Vanderwelt, and with the beaming eyes of Minnie watching over me.

The report of Minnie's beauty was fully warranted. When she first made her appearance, the effect upon me was quite electrical: her style was radiant, and almost dazzling—a something you did not expect to find in the human countenance. Their reception of me was all that I could desire; their affection shewn towards me, their anxiety about my wound, and joy at once more having me under their roof, proved that I had not been forgotten. After a short time, Vangilt left the room, and I remained on the sofa, one hand in the grasp of Mr. Vanderwelt, the other holding the not unwilling one of Minnie. That evening I made

known to them all that had taken place since I last wrote to them, winding up with the loss of my frigate, the death of Lord de Versely, and my subsequent capture and rescue.

“And so it was in attempting to come and see us that you were wounded and nearly murdered?”

“Yes, Minnie; I had long been anxious to see you, and could not help availing myself of the first opportunity.”

“Thank God, you are here at last,” said Mr. Vanderwelt, “and that there is now every prospect of a conclusion to the war.”

“And you won’t go to sea any more—will you, Percival?” said Minnie.

“They won’t give me a ship, Minnie, after having lost the one I commanded; to be unfortunate is to be guilty, in those who have no interest.”

“I’m very glad to hear it; then you’ll remain quietly on shore, and you will come and see us.”

As I had been rendered feverish by travelling, and my wound was a little angry, as soon as it was dressed for the night, they left me to repose; but that I could not—the form of Minnie haunted me; to sleep was impossible, and I lay thinking of her till day dawned. The fact was, that I was for the first time in love, and that in no small degree—before morning I was desperately so. Indeed, there was excuse sufficient, for Minnie was as winning in her manners as she was lovely in her person, and I was not at all surprised at hearing from Vangilt of the numerous suitors for her hand.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE next morning I was pale and feverish, which they observed with concern. Minnie was sitting by me, and Mr. Vanderwelt had left the room, when she said, "How very pale you are, and your hand is so hot; I wish the doctor would come."

"I could not sleep last night, Minnie—and it was all your fault."

"My fault!"

"Yes, your fault; for I could not sleep for thinking of you; I thought you were looking at me as you do now the whole night."

Minnie blushed, and I kissed her hand.

As soon as my wound was dressed, I re-

requested writing materials, and wrote to the Admiralty, giving an account of what had occurred since I quitted Heligoland (I had written to inform them of the loss of the frigate when I was on the island). I stated in my despatches that my wound would probably confine me for some weeks, but as soon as I was able to be moved, I should return to England to await their orders. I also wrote to my mother and Mr. Warden. I informed the latter of what had passed, and the delay which would be occasioned by my wound, and requested him to write to me more fully as to the death of Lord de Versely, and any other particulars which might interest me.

Having sealed these despatches, and entrusted them to the care of Mr. Vanderwelt, my mind was relieved, and I had nothing to do but to think of and talk to Minnie. That my progress in her affections was rapid, was not to be wondered at, her attachment to me having commenced so early; and as her father was

evidently pleased at our increasing intimacy, in a fortnight after my arrival at Hamburg Minnie had consented to be mine, and her father had joined our hands, and given us his blessing.

As I now had no secrets from them, I detailed my whole history, the cause of Lord de Versely's patronage, and the mystery of my birth. I opened the seal-skin pouch to shew them Lord de Versely's letter to my mother, and stated what had been the object of my ambition through life, and how great was my disappointment at my hopes being overthrown by the death of his lordship.

"My dear Percival," said old Mr. Vanderwelt, after I had concluded my narrative, "you have been pursuing a shadow, although the pursuit has called forth all your energies, and led to your advancement. You have the substance. You have wealth more than sufficient, for you know how rich I am. You have reputation, which is better than wealth,

and you have now, I trust, a fair prospect of domestic happiness, for Minnie will be as good a wife as she has been a daughter. What, then, do you desire? A name. And what is that? Nothing. If you do not like your present name, from its association with your putative father of low origin, change it to mine. You will receive the fortune of an heiress, which will fully warrant your so doing. At all events, let not your pride stand in the way of your happiness. We cannot expect every thing in this world. You have much to be thankful to Heaven for, and you must not repine because you cannot obtain all."

"I have so ardently desired it all my life; it has been the sole object of my ambition," replied I, "and I cannot but severely feel the disappointment."

"Granted; but you must bear the disappointment, or rather you must forget it; regret for what cannot be obtained is not only unavail-

ing, but I may say, it is sinful. You have much to thank God for."

"I have indeed, Sir," replied I, as I kissed his daughter, "and I will not repine. I will take your name when you give me Minnie, and I will think no more about that of Delmar."

After this conversation, the subject was not renewed. I felt too happy with Minnie's love to care much about any thing else; my ambition melted away before it, and I looked forward to the time when I might embrace her as my own.

My wound healed rapidly; I had been a month at Hamburg, and was able to limp about a little, when one day, Cross came in with a packet of letters from England.

There was one from the Admiralty, acknowledging the receipt of my two letters, one announcing the loss of the *Circe*, and the other my subsequent adventures, desiring me to come home as soon as my wound would permit

me, to have the cause of the loss of the *Circe* investigated by a court-martial ; that of course : one from my mother, thanking Heaven that I had escaped so many dangers with only a bullet in my leg, and stating her intention of going up to the town to see me as soon as she heard of my arrival ; the third was a voluminous epistle from Mr. Warden, which I shall give to the reader in his own words.

“ My dear Captain Keene,—I received your two letters, the first, acquainting me with your miraculous preservation after the loss of your frigate, and the other with your subsequent adventures on *terra firma*. You appear to me to have a charmed life, and as there is now every prospect of a speedy termination to this long and devastating war, I hope you will live many days. I did not enter into many particulars as to Lord de Versely’s death, as it was so sudden ; the property left you is not perhaps of so much value in itself, as it is as a mark of his regard and esteem. Nevertheless, if ever

you sit down quietly and take a wife, you will find that it will save you a few thousands in furnishing and decorating ; the plate, pictures, and objects *de vertu*, as they are termed, are really valuable, and I know that you will not part with them, bequeathed as they have been by your friend and patron.

“I must now refer to particulars of more consequence. You know that, as a legal adviser, my lips are supposed to be sealed, and they would have remained so now, had it not been that circumstances have occurred which warrant my disclosure ; indeed, I may say that I have permission to speak plainly, as you have to repel charges against you which, if not disproved, may seriously affect your future interests. Know, then, that when you were last at Madeline Hall, I was sent for to draw up the will of the Honourable Miss Delmar, and I then discovered that the will which had been made in favour of Lord de Versely, to whom Miss Delmar had left every thing, was by his

express desire to be altered in your favour ; and at the same time the secret of your birth was confided to me. You will see, therefore, that Lord de Versely did not neglect your interests. The De Versely property he could not leave you, but he did what he could in your favour. This will was signed, sealed, and attested, and is now in my possession ; and as the old lady is very shakey, and something approaching to imbecile, I considered that in a short time I should have to congratulate you upon your succession to this fine property, which is a clear £8,000 per annum.

“ You must also know, that Colonel Delmar, whom you also met here, and who accompanied you to Portsmouth, has always hoped that he would be the heir of the old lady ; and, indeed, had you not stepped in, I have no doubt but eventually such would have been the case. It appears that he has, by some means, discovered that you have ousted him, and since you sailed he has returned to Madeline Hall,

and has so unsettled the old lady, by reporting that you are an impostor and no relation by blood, that she has given me instructions to make a new will in his favour. By what means he has prevailed upon her, I cannot tell : the chief support of his assertion rests upon some letters, which he has either surreptitiously obtained or forged, written by your mother, and addressed to you. Now, that your mother has been supposed to be dead many years, I knew well, for Lord de Versely told me so. The old lady has shewn me these letters, which certainly appear authentic ; and she says, that if you have deceived her and Lord de Versely as to your mother's death, you have deceived them in every thing else, and that she does not now believe that you are the son of her nephew. As I hinted before, the old lady is almost in her dotage, and cannot well be reasoned with, for she is very positive. I argued as long as I could with her, but in vain. At last she consented to stop proceedings until I heard from

you, saying, ‘ If I can have any proof under my nephew’s own hand that Percival is his son, I will be content, but without that I sign the new will.’

“ Such is the state of affairs, that you have little chance if such a document cannot be produced, I feel certain ; at all events, I have gained delay, which we lawyers always aim at. I only wish the old lady would take a sudden departure, and leave the question as unsettled as it is. Had Lord de Versely not been so suddenly called away, this would never have happened ; as it is, we must make the best fight we can. At present, the colonel has it all his own way. Pray write immediately, and explain as much as you can of this strange affair, and let me know what steps you think it advisable to be taken.

“ Yours very truly,

“ F. WARDEN.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE receipt of this letter was extremely mortifying to me. I could not help feeling, that if I lost the fine property which had been intended for me, I lost it chiefly by the deceit practised relative to my mother's supposed death, and that if I did lose the estate in consequence, it was a proper punishment. At the same time, I felt not a little indignant at the conduct of Colonel Delmar. I now understood why it was that he was talking with Mr. Warden's clerk when I passed by them, and I also felt certain that he must have taken advantage of my situation at Portsmouth, and have opened my desk, and stolen the letters from my mother.

For this I resolved to call him to account, under any circumstances (that is, whether he or I became the heir to the old lady), as soon as I could fall in with him. Although I was far from despising the property which I was now likely to lose, yet I was more actuated in my wish to regain it by my enmity towards him, and I immediately resolved upon what I would do.

As I was still unfit to travel, and, moreover, was resolved not to leave Hamburg without Minnie as my wife, I sent for Cross, and telling him, in few words, what had taken place, asked him if he would immediately start for England, which he gladly consented to do. The old lady requires, it seems, proof from Lord de Versely's own hand, that I am his son; fortunately, that is in my power to give; so do you take this, and as soon as you arrive in England, make all haste to Mr. Warden's, and put it into his own hands. I then took off the seal-skin pouch containing Lord de Versely's

letter to my mother, and confided it to his care. At the same time, I wrote a long letter to Mr. Warden, explaining as far as I could the means which the colonel had used to get possession of the letters, and the reason which induced me to make his lordship believe that my mother was dead. I did not attempt to extenuate my conduct; on the contrary, I severely blamed myself for my deception, and acknowledged that if I lost the estate, it was nothing more than I deserved.

Cross made all haste, and sailed the next morning. Having put this affair in train, I had nothing to do but to give all my thoughts to Minnie. In another fortnight I was completely recovered, and then I mentioned to Mr. Vanderwelt my anxiety that the marriage should take place. No difficulties were raised, and it was settled that on that day week I should lead my Minnie to the altar. I thought that the week would never expire, but, like all other weeks, it died a natural death at last, and we were united.

The *fête* was over, the company had all left us, and we were again alone, and I held my dearest Minnie in my arms, when Mr. Vanderwelt brought me in a letter from England. It was from Mr. Warden, and I hastily opened it; Minnie shared my impatience, and read over my shoulder; the contents were as follows:—

“My dear Captain Keene,—Most fortunate it was for you, that you have preserved that letter, but I must not anticipate. On receiving it from Cross, I immediately went with it to the old lady and presented it to her; I did more, I read over your letter in which you stated your reasons for making Lord de Versely believe that your mother was dead. The old lady, who is now very far gone in her intellect, could hardly understand me. However, her nephew’s handwriting roused her up a little, and she said, ‘Well, well—I see—I must think about it. I won’t decide: I must hear what the colonel

says.' Now this is what I did not wish her to do; but she was positive, and I was obliged to leave her. The colonel was sent for, but I do not know what the result was, or rather might have been, as fortune stood your friend in a most unexpected way.

“As I went out, I perceived two gentlemen arrive in a post-chaise. One of them appeared very ill and feeble, hardly able to walk up the steps. They inquired for Colonel Delmar, and were shewn into a sitting-room until he came out of Mrs. Delmar's apartment. I saw him come out; and there was so much satisfaction in his countenance, that I felt sure that he had gained over the old lady. And I went home, resolving that I would burn the new will which had not been signed, if it were only to gain the delay of having to make it over again. But the next morning an express arrived for me to go immediately to the Hall. I did so; but I did not take the new will with me, as I felt certain that if I had so done, it would

have been signed that day. But I was mistaken : I had been sent for on account of the death of Colonel Delmar, who had that morning fallen in a duel with Major Stapleton, the officer who fought with you. It appears that Captain Green had informed the major of the language used by the colonel when Major S. was supposed to be dead ; and that the major, who has been very ill ever since, only waited till he was able to stand to demand satisfaction of the colonel. It was the major with his friend whom I met as I left the Hall the day before. They fought at daylight, and both fell. The major, however, lived long enough to acknowledge that the duel with you had been an arranged thing between him and the colonel, that you might be put out of the way, after the information the colonel had received from my clerk, and that the colonel was to have rewarded him handsomely if he had sent you into the other world. I suspect after this, that the fowling-piece going off in

the cover was not quite so accidental as was supposed. However, the colonel is out of your way now, and the old lady has received such a shock, that there is no fear of her altering the will ; indeed, if she attempted it, I doubt if it would be valid, as she is now quite gone in her intellect. I have, therefore, destroyed the one not signed, and have no doubt but that in a very few weeks I may have to congratulate you upon your succession to this property. I think that the sooner you can come home the better, and I advise you to take up your quarters at Madeline Hall, for possession is nine points of the law, and you can keep off all trespassers.

“ Yours most truly,

“ F. WARDEN.”

“ Well, Minnie, dearest, I may congratulate you, I believe, as the lady of Madeline Hall,” said I, folding up the letter.

“Yes, Percival, but there is a postscript overleaf, which you have not read.”

I turned back to the letter.

“P.S. I quite forgot to tell you, that there is a condition attached to your taking possession of the property, which, as it was at the particular request of Lord de Versely, I presume you will not object to, which is—that you assume the *arms* and name of Delmar.”

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